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**MISSION ORDERS:  
IS INTENT THE ANSWER?**

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

**MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE**

by

**GENE C. KAMENA, MAJ, USA**  
B.A., Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama, 1979

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MASTER OF MILITARY ARTS AND SCIENCE

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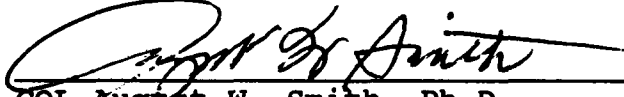
Name of Candidate: Major Gene C. Kamena

Title of Thesis: Mission Orders: Is Intent the Answer?

Approved by:

  
LTC Thomas C. Schmidt, M.S., M.M.A.S., Thesis Committee Chairman

  
LTC Thomas E. Christianson, M.A., Member

  
COL August W. Smith, Ph.D., Member, Consulting Faculty

Accepted this 5th day of June 1992 by:

  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D., Director, Graduate Degree Programs

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

MISSION ORDERS: IS INTENT THE ANSWER? by MAJ Gene C. Kamena, USA, 147 pages.

This study investigates U.S. Army doctrine for the commander's intent statement. The inclusion of the commander's intent statement as doctrine is traced from the 1982 version of FM 100-5, Operations, to the present.

Current doctrine for the intent statement is not specific enough for commanders in the field; however, emerging U.S. Army doctrine is found to be basically sound. The U.S. Army's emerging doctrine contained in FM 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations, is taught at the Army's Command and General Staff College and is commonly accepted as current doctrine.

Rotations at the National Training and the Joint Readiness Training Centers provide data for the research. The actions of subordinate leaders are evaluated to determine to what degree the U.S. Army's doctrine for intent allows freedom of action to subordinates.

This study concludes that a properly constructed intent statement facilitates the issuance of mission orders. Research found the most useful intent statements address the purpose of the operation, desired end state, and how to achieve the desired end state. Properly formulated and communicated, the commander's intent statement is a powerful tool which encourages initiative in subordinates.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction.

The United States Army's keystone war fighting manual, Field Manual 100-5, Operations, states that mission orders are used whenever possible to facilitate initiative in subordinates, initiative being one of the four tenets which our doctrine is based upon.<sup>1</sup> Within the concept of mission orders, the commander's intent statement is the primary tool available to facilitate initiative in subordinates.

Commander's intent is not a new concept; however, only recently has the U.S. Army's doctrine prescribed ingredients for the commander's intent statement.<sup>2</sup> Intent doctrine continues to evolve; consequently, the relevance, use, and content of the commander's intent portion of the operations order are issues of debate with the U.S. Army.

This thesis addresses whether or not the U.S. Army's doctrine for the commander's intent facilitates the issuance of mission orders.

#### Significance of the Study.

U.S. Army doctrine places great emphasis on commanders giving subordinates freedom of action in battle.<sup>3</sup> Mission orders are encouraged at every level of command -

orders which tell subordinates what to do and the context in which actions are to be taken, but not how to accomplish the mission. For subordinates to act in accordance with their commander's wishes, they must first understand what is expected of them.

The operations order is the primary tool used by commanders to communicate with subordinates. In the order, the commander must communicate his plan, concentrate combat power, synchronize battlefield operating systems, and still allow his subordinates the freedom of action required for success. On future battlefields, there will be times when subordinates are not in communication with the commander. To maintain agility and initiative, junior leaders cannot wait for the commander to tell them what to do.

The formal inclusion of the commander's intent statement into the orders process is a recent phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> The premise for including the intent statement into doctrine is that it facilitates the initiative required to win on the battlefield. Unfortunately, many leaders in the U.S. Army are still trying to come to grips with the commander's intent.

Many concerns are not addressed by current doctrine. How does the commander's intent relate to the mission statement and the concept of operations? How does a subordinate use the commander's intent to gain an appreciation for the overall plan? These are but two questions which field commanders are still wrestling with.

### Background.

The goal of combat operations is to generate more combat power at a given time and place than our enemies.<sup>5</sup> The concept of combat power which is the ability to fight consists of four elements: maneuver, protection, firepower, and leadership.<sup>6</sup> U.S. Army doctrine tells us that leadership is the most important element in the process of generating and maintaining combat power.<sup>7</sup> Leaders decide how to employ the other elements of combat power.

Leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation.<sup>8</sup> Purpose gives soldiers a reason to perform dangerous acts on the battlefield.<sup>9</sup> Direction provides focus for training and combat operations.<sup>10</sup> This focus is based on the commander's vision of how success is defined for the organization or unit. Motivation provides the will for soldiers to accomplish the mission assigned.<sup>11</sup> If soldiers understand the purpose and direction of an operation and they have confidence in their leaders, motivation will exist to take the correct action.

The leadership imperatives of purpose, direction, and motivation are the heart of the commander's vision for his organization.<sup>12</sup> A commander's vision is nothing more than what must occur in order for his organization to succeed. The commander provides an over-riding vision for his organization; he establishes the focus for everything the unit does. This

far-reaching or strategic vision is long term in nature and usually does not change to any great degree throughout the life of the organization. This type of vision is associated with stable environments containing fixed objectives.

Additionally, the commander must provide vision for specific missions and tasks. In the U.S. Army, this focused vision is typically associated with tactical operations; it is the commander's intent. Tactical vision or intent exists for finite periods of time. A commander's intent also may change much more frequently than a strategic vision given the uncertainty of modern combat.

For the commander's intent to be useful, it must be expressed in such a way that all concerned understand what the commander expects. Intent statements expressed in clear, concise, and complete terms are critical to this process.<sup>13</sup>

The U.S. Army's command and control process provides the framework for the commander to communicate his vision or intent to subordinates.<sup>14</sup> Command and control, although complementary, are two different processes. Command is directive by nature; "it is the process by which the will and the intent of the commander is infused among subordinates."<sup>15</sup> Control, on the other hand, is regulatory by nature; "it is the process by which subordinate behavior inconsistent with the will and intent of the commander is identified and corrected."<sup>16</sup> This is not to say that subordinates do not want to do the right thing; most unreliable behavior is not

intentional. This behavior arises from the subordinates not understanding how they fit into the overall scheme of events on the battlefield.

Control is the process which compensates for this behavior. Control is by nature slow to react, and is dependent on other systems, procedures, and hardware. United States Army doctrine requires commanders to minimize control. In reality, "success in battle will require a combination of command and control; however, effort should be directed toward emphasis on command minimizing control."<sup>17</sup>

The operations order format is a sub-element of the U.S. Army's command and control process. It facilitates both command and control. The operations order, whether verbal or written, is the primary tool available to the commander to convey his intent to his subordinates. Additionally, the order format facilitates the control process by imposing the restrictions and limitations required by the operation.

The intent portion of an order allows the commander to communicate what is required for success on the battlefield.<sup>18</sup> The idea of the commander's intent is not new.<sup>19</sup> However, it was not until the AirLand Battle Doctrine of 1982, that emphasis was placed on subordinates understanding the commander's intent at least two levels up.<sup>20</sup> Six years later, the U.S. Army published the first doctrine concerning the content of the commander's intent. This occurred in May, 1988, when Lieutenant General Gerald T.

Bartlett, Commander of the Combined Arms Command, distributed a message establishing the content and format for intent.<sup>21</sup> This message was important because much confusion existed in the U.S. Army concerning the commander's intent. Lieutenant General Bartlett's message stated that the commander's intent was part of Paragraph 3A., Concept of Operations. The Bartlett message also stated that the commander's intent:

**...expands why he has tasked the force to do the mission stated in paragraph 2. It tells what results are expected; how these results help future operations; and how (in broad terms), the command visualizes achieving those results (force as a whole).<sup>22</sup>**

The message further directs the commander to state his concept and intent in detail but that he should not exceed more than five or six lines.<sup>23</sup>

The May 1988, message provided commanders the first doctrine for the content and format for intent. Even so, much confusion still existed. Commanders appeared confused as to how the intent related to the mission statement and the concept of operations. Although the U.S. Army as a whole accepted the need for a commander's intent statement, the content, format, and development of a commander's intent statement was still a source of debate.

The doctrine for commander's intent was modified again in September 1990, when General Foss, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander, approved the following definition for commander's intent:

**Intent is the commander's stated vision which defines the purpose of an operation; the end state with the respect to the relationship among the force, the enemy, and the terrain; and briefly how the end state will be achieved by the force as a whole.<sup>24</sup>**

General Foss directed that intent should follow the mission statement and precede Paragraph 3A., Concept of Operations, in the operations order format.

General Foss's guidance provides the basis for emerging doctrine concerning the commander's intent portion of the operations order. Leaders are still trying to come to terms with the specifics of the commander's intent. This is an important issue throughout the U.S. Army; a common understanding of intent doctrine is critical in implementing the AirLand Battle Doctrine.

#### **Research Question.**

Mission orders are required by the U.S. Army's AirLand Battle Doctrine. Does the U.S. Army's current doctrine for the commander's intent doctrine adequately support the communication of mission orders?

#### **Assumptions.**

Assumptions are presented in Chapter Three as part of the research methodology.



### **Definition of Terms.**

1. **Communication:** The exchange of information and ideas from one person to another.<sup>25</sup> A method or means of conveying information of any kind from one person or place to another.<sup>26</sup>

2. **Mission:** The primary task assigned to an individual, unit, or force. It usually contains the elements of who, what, when, where, and the reason thereof, but seldom specifies how.<sup>27</sup> The task, together with the purpose, clearly indicates the action(s) to be taken and the reason(s). In common usage especially when applied to lower military units, a duty assigned to an individual or unit; a task.<sup>28</sup>

3. **Operations Order:** Provides for the coordinated action to carry out the decision of a commander in the conduct of an operation.<sup>29</sup> A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for effecting the coordinated execution of an operation; includes tactical movement orders.<sup>30</sup>

4. **Mission Order:** Orders issued to a lower unit that include the accomplishment of the total mission assigned to the higher headquarters. An order to a unit to perform a mission without specifying how it is to be done.<sup>31</sup> Orders that specify what must be done without prescribing how it must be done.<sup>32</sup>

5. **Initiative:** Means of setting or changing the terms of battle by action. It implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations. Applied to the force as a

whole, initiative requires a constant effort to force the enemy to conform to our operational purpose and tempo while retaining our freedom of action. Applied to individual soldiers and leaders, it requires a willingness and ability to act independently within the framework of the higher commander's intent. In both senses, initiative requires audacity which may involve risk-taking and an atmosphere that supports it.<sup>33</sup>

6. **Intent:** Provides the basis for developing the concept of operations. Commander's intent defines:

(a) The operation's purpose.

(b) The operation's end state (describing the relationship between the friendly force and the enemy force with respect to their capabilities and the terrain).

(c) How the force as a whole will achieve the end state. (By using doctrinal concepts, the "how" remains broad yet concise. The commander states the appropriate form of maneuver, defense pattern, or type of retrograde operation he expects his force to use).

Commanders form intent from mission analysis, the intents of higher commanders, and their own vision. Commanders must personally state their intent everytime they receive a mission, an order, or when changing circumstances nullify previous intent. Intent also helps subordinate commanders clearly understand the roles their tasks play

within the larger theater and within the constraints of the higher commander's intent. <sup>34</sup>

### Limitations.

1. This thesis concentrates in the area of communication theory only to the extent necessary for the proposed research question.

2. A vast amount of research material exists in the area of mission orders from the German perspective. Much of this material is in German; since I do not read German, my research is restricted to secondary translations.

3. The existing research in the area of vision as a leadership tool is extensive. This thesis focuses on a small number of works related to the research question.

4. Although commanders may use written or verbal orders to communicate their intent and decision to subordinates, this thesis investigates only written orders. Firsthand observation was not possible during the issuance of verbal orders; thus, this thesis does not attempt research in the area of verbal orders. This applies specifically to research conducted pertaining to rotations at the National Training Center (NTC) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

### Delimitations.

1. This study is constrained to the time period of 1982 to 1991.

2. This study concentrates on the commander's intent as it relates to tactical operations.

3. This study is focused at brigade level and below.

**Study Outline.**

This study outline is divided into five chapters. The first chapter (Chapter One) discusses why this research is important. It also presents background information to the problem which is essential to understanding the problem. This background information is important to the understanding of the problem. This chapter concentrates on the relationship between the following topics: the U.S. Army's command and control system; the operations order; and intent. Chapter Two is a review of literature. It is divided into five sections: Background; the German Influence; Contemporary Thought; Current Doctrine; and Emerging Doctrine. The third chapter of the study outline (Chapter Three) establishes the methodology used in answering the research question. Criteria is established and a hypothesis is presented. Chapter Four presents and analyzes data in order to confirm or deny the hypothesis. The last chapter (Chapter Five) provides conclusions and recommendations.

#### ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 21.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald T. Bartlett, Message, Subject: "Commander's Intent/Concept of Operation", (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Combined Arms Center, May 1988).

<sup>3</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (1986), 21.

<sup>4</sup>Bartlett, Message, (1988).

<sup>5</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (1986), 11.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>8</sup>FM 22-100, Military Leadership, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1990), 1.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1987), 16.

<sup>13</sup>FM 22-100, Military Leadership, (1990), 46.

<sup>14</sup>FC 101-55, Corps and Division Command and Control, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 3-1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 3-2.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 2-1.

<sup>19</sup>FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, (1987), 33.

<sup>20</sup>John J. Romjue, From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973-1982, (Ft. Monroe: United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984), 68.

<sup>21</sup>Bartlett, Message, (1988).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>John C. Barbee, Memorandum, Subject: "Command Philosophy Paper Guidance AY 91-92", (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1991).

<sup>25</sup>FM 22-100, Military Leadership, (1990), 67.

<sup>26</sup>JCS PUB. 1, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1986), 80.

<sup>27</sup>FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 1-47.

<sup>28</sup>JCS PUB. 1, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (1986), 232.

<sup>29</sup>FM 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations, (1984), 7-2.

<sup>30</sup>FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols, (1985), 1-53.

<sup>31</sup>JCS PUB.1, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (1986), 232.

<sup>32</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (1986), 21.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>34</sup>FM 101-5, Draft, Staff Organization and Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1991), 1-5.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SURVEY OF LITERATURE**

A vast amount of information is available pertaining to the commander's intent statement within our doctrine. This chapter assists future researchers narrowing a search by providing a selected survey of key works. These documents establish a foundation of knowledge necessary to answer the research question. In comparison to the number of works available to select from, the quantity of works examined in this chapter is small. Only references which directly contributed to the understanding of the research question are examined.

This chapter is organized to present information in two main categories: Leadership and Communication Theory and Intent. Leadership and Communication Theory provides a basis for understanding key principles in the communication of ideas and the motivation of individuals and organizations. The section on Intent is divided into five subsections: Background; the German Influence; Contemporary Thought; Current Doctrine; and Emerging Doctrine. Finally, a summary is provided in order to link the separate parts of this chapter into a meaningful conclusion.

## LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION THEORY

### Leadership Theory.

The AirLand Battlefield Doctrine is leadership intensive. Field Manual 100-5, Operations states: "The most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership."<sup>1</sup> The amount of research in this area is extensive. A small sample of the most pertinent works are discussed only as they pertain to the research question. This category includes civil and military publications.

Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership, is the U.S. Army's keystone manual for leadership at lower levels. It focuses at the company level and below, but its principles apply to all leaders. This manual defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation."<sup>2</sup> Field Manual 22-100 states that one way of providing purpose to subordinates is to communicate intent in such a way that subordinates clearly understand what is expected of them.<sup>3</sup> The manual also states "this can only happen if you explain what you want to happen in clear, concise, and complete terms."<sup>4</sup> Other than relating intent to the purpose of an operation, the manual does not define what intent is. It does state that the "U.S. Army needs competent and confident leaders who are bold, innovative, and willing to take well-calculated risks within the commander's intent."<sup>5</sup> Many references are made to the commander's intent; why it is



important; and how it provides purpose for soldiers, but unfortunately intent is never defined or discussed in detail.

The principles established in Field Manual 22-100 are expanded upon in Field Manual 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels. This manual is not directed at a particular level of leadership or command, but rather builds upon the Airland Battle Doctrine and Field Manual 22-100.<sup>6</sup> The need to balance direct and indirect skills is a key theme throughout this manual. This is apparent even in the definition of leadership and command offered by the manual; "the art of direct and indirect influence and the skill of creating the conditions for sustained organizational success to achieve the desired result."<sup>7</sup> Just as Field Manual 22-100 discusses purpose, direction, and motivation, so does Field Manual 22-103. These three elements are called leadership imperatives in Field Manual 22-103. The manual states that these imperatives are essential for focusing action of subordinates and that commanders relate these imperatives to subordinates by way of their vision for the organization. Vision is defined in Field Manual 22-103 as follows:

**Vision is a senior leader's source of effectiveness. In a Clausewitzian sense, it is his inner light. In a war fighting sense, it is the senior leader's personal concept of what the organization must be capable of doing by some future point. It can be an intuitive sensing, a precise mission, or a higher commander's intent for a battle or campaign.<sup>8</sup>**

This definition is broad enough in scope to allow commanders to formulate visions for different situations. If the

organization operates in a stable environment with little change, the vision may be long term in nature. On the other hand, if the environment in which the organization operates is constantly changing, such as in combat, the vision may be very short term. During combat operations, the commander's vision is referred to as his intent.

This manual also states that "those at senior levels ensure that their vision includes provisions to provide the purpose, direction, and motivation to their units and soldiers demanded by Field Manual 100-5."<sup>9</sup> Each of these elements are important enough to discuss in turn.

The purpose gives a reason for being for the organization. It depends on the ability of the leader to communicate clearly "the organization's mission in the short and long term context."<sup>10</sup> The purpose also allows for initiative by individual soldiers. Purpose "provides the means for independent thought and decision to solve unanticipated problems that are best resolved when acted on rapidly."<sup>11</sup>

The second element a leader's vision must provide, according to Field Manual 22-103, is direction. Direction charts a course that the organization must take to be successful.<sup>12</sup> The manual states that the leader must establish goals and standards in order to provide organizational direction.

Motivation is the last ingredient which the leader

must provide in his vision. This is the force required for the unit or organization to be successful. Field Manual 22-103 states that the leader must ensure the proper motivation exists "by developing the proper ethical perspective; sustaining a positive and progressive command climate; and fostering a sense of unity that generates unshakable organizational cohesion."<sup>13</sup>

Field Manual 22-103 provides the basis for leadership theory in the U.S. Army. The manual is well written and concise. Many of the principles found in the work are reenforced in much of the literature found in the civilian sector.

One work which reenforces much of the basic principles described in military leadership doctrine is In Search of Excellence, by Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr. This book provides lessons learned from many of the leading companies in America. One of the eight principles mentioned in the book is that man is waiting for motivation. In Chapter Three, which pertains to the motivation of man, the authors speak of "transforming leadership - leadership that builds on man's need for meaning; leadership that creates institutional purpose."<sup>14</sup> The authors also say that many of the successful companies have a unique culture all their own within their organizations. Shared values are key to creating such a culture with a common purpose in organizations. The authors state the benefits for establishing a common purpose for the

organization and its members are "better relative performance and a higher level of contribution from the average man."<sup>15</sup>

Another useful text on the subject of leadership in the corporate world is Perry Smith's book, Taking Charge, which discusses the concept of providing purpose to an organization in much depth. He calls the process providing vision. In fact, the need to provide vision is one of twenty leadership fundamentals presented in Smith's Chapter One and discussed later in the book. Mr. Smith states that "leaders who are not planners are simply caretakers, gatekeepers, and time-servers."<sup>16</sup> The creation of a strategic vision is discussed in great detail in Chapter Fifteen of his work. The author discusses the need for all companies and organizations to conduct long-range planning. He states that it is useful for companies to reassess where they are from time-to-time in the planning process. He also says that while planning must be done, leaders must not become too rigid and out of touch with reality.<sup>17</sup> Thus, leaders must base their vision on the environment around them. The environment may take into consideration the training and experience of the people working for the organization.

Jay A. Conger's book, The Charismatic Leader, gives some interesting examples of how leaders provide this vision to organizations. This work gives illustrations of leadership characteristics from the careers of several successful leaders such as: Lee Iacocca; Mary Kay; John DeLoran; and H. Ross

Perot. A central theme in the book is that leaders motivate subordinates to take risk in solving problems. The concept of providing a vision for subordinates to work within and towards is key in this process. Mr. Conger makes a distinction between vision and purpose. He states that vision "encompasses abstract goals" and "provides a broad perspective of the organization's purpose."<sup>18</sup> The author also distinguishes between purpose and vision by relating purpose to the everyday running of a company, and vision to the reason the company or organization exists. This work also discusses the formulation of vision and how to communicate it to subordinates. The communication of the vision is key. This is the process where the leader gets the worker to "buy into" the values of the organization.<sup>19</sup> The use of the appropriate language and the understanding of the audience are critical ingredients for the leader to communicate his vision to the organization.

The fact that a leader must provide a purpose or vision for his organization is a common thought that runs throughout the works discussed. Both civil and military works discuss this in great detail. Whether we call it vision, purpose, or intent, once it is formulated, it must be presented to subordinates in such a way that they understand what the leader wants done. Communication is the process by which this is accomplished.

### Communication Theory.

Regardless of how much leadership a commander possesses, he will not be successful unless he is able to communicate what he wants to achieve on the battlefield to his subordinates. A basic communication model provides insight into how messages are sent from one person to another. The book, Leadership Communication, by Ernest L. Stech, discusses such a model. The author states that "a basic model of communication includes the ideas of messages, codes, channels, senders, and receivers."<sup>20</sup> The first step in the process is for the sender to encode the message; this is done by either writing, using numbers, words, or pictures. Sending the message involves energy, usually speaking, writing, or drawing. The receiver takes the energy and decodes the message.<sup>21</sup> Although this model expresses the basic concepts involved in communications, it is very simplistic and does not allow for two way communications. At a minimum, the receiver should provide the sender feedback concerning the message. Mr. Stech's works also discusses more complex models of communications, but the basic model is sufficient to provide a foundation as to how we communicate.

Mr. Stech's basic communications model is useful when considering the process that the commander must accomplish in order to give his intent to his subordinates. The commander is the sender and must encode the message, the message being his intent. He can encode the message by either writing his

intent or putting it into words. In most instances, the commander uses a combination of verbal and written channels to express his intent. When encoding the message, the commander should consider the audience he is addressing. It is critical for the commander to use terms or language that are understood by the receivers. Furthermore, the commander should provide mechanisms to obtain feedback from the receivers.

In the Human Communication Handbook, by Brent D. Ruben and Richard W. Budd, feedback is defined as "communication to a person (or a group) which tells how he affects others."<sup>22</sup> The work also states that feedback can serve "to correct communications strategies to enhance the likelihood that the outcomes of his communicating will match his intentions."<sup>23</sup> This is an important point; ensuring that junior leaders understand what is expected of them is critical in the concept of mission orders.

During tactical operations, the commander uses the commander's intent statement as a leadership and communication tool to convey to his subordinates what he wants to accomplish. Therefore, the study of intent lays the foundation for this study.

## **Intent**

### **Background.**

This section provides a general background describing how our current doctrine evolved from the doctrine of Active Defense to AirLand Battle. The 1982 version of Field Manual 100-5 laid the foundation for our current doctrine. There were many changes from the 1976 version of Field Manual 100-5; this section concentrates on concepts directly relating to the research question. The primary source of information for this section was obtained from John L. Romjue's monograph, From Active Defense to Airland Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973-1982. This work was most insightful in providing the key players and events which helped formulate the basis for our current doctrine. More importantly, Mr. Romjue relates why the U.S. Army, as a whole, lost faith in the concepts of the Active Defense. He describes in detail the changing environment the U.S. Army must fight in, and why a new doctrine was formulated to meet this new challenges.

"Leaving behind earlier emphasis on firepower and force ratios, the doctrine of Airland Battle published in 1982, was an initiative-oriented military doctrine that restored the maneuver-firepower balance, turned the attention anew to the moral factors and human dimension of combat, and signalled a return to the fundamental principles governing victory in battle."<sup>24</sup> To many in the U.S. Army, the Active Defense's approach to combat was too mechanical. Much



emphasis was placed on the "servicing of targets" and the "calculus of battle" at the expense of maneuver and the human element of combat.<sup>25</sup> The writers of the new doctrine, Lieutenant Colonel Wass de Czege, Lieutenant Colonel Holder, and Lieutenant Colonel Henriques received much guidance from senior general officers. As the writers finished a chapter, they would send it to the generals for comment.<sup>26</sup> Another influence on the writers came from Lieutenant General Richard E. Cavazos, "an exponent of the importance of the moral aspect of combat,"<sup>27</sup> who was then Commander of the U.S. Army III Corps. Because of these influences and others, the writers sought to return to fundamentals. They relied on the principles of war to provide much of the foundation for the new doctrine. The writers developed a list of combat imperatives which described the fundamentals of combat. These were "based on the principles of war and oriented to contemporary battle."<sup>28</sup>

Although not all the changes to the Active Defense Doctrine directly relate to the study of commander's intent, it is important to mention some of these changes for a better understanding of the new doctrine. One of the most significant changes occurred in defensive doctrine. AirLand Battle reemphasized the importance of maneuver in the defense. The writers established a balance between firepower and maneuver, one of the early goals of General Richardson.<sup>29</sup> The writings of Basil H. Liddell Hart and J.F.C. Fuller had a

significant impact on the offensive concepts adapted by the doctrine writers. The five operational concepts adapted within the new doctrine were: surprise; concentration; speed; flexibility; and audacity.<sup>30</sup> These are important because they relied heavily on junior leaders taking the initiative during combat, even when they were not in communication with their commander. The commander's intent was the tool used to provide focus and set parameters for subordinates.

In January 1981, a coordinating draft of the new Field Manual 100-5 was sent to the field for comments. As a result, "the adaptation of the German conception of mission orders-Auftragstaktik" was incorporated into the manual.<sup>31</sup> General Shoemaker, Commander of the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) saw this as a means of command and control under adverse battle conditions. General Starry, Commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) also "supported adapting the German concept of mission orders in which subordinate leaders were trained to choose an alternative way, within their commander's intent, to execute a mission when the original way no longer made sense under changed combat conditions."<sup>32</sup> The new doctrine placed much more emphasis on the element of leadership than had the previous doctrine. As a part of this leadership process, initiative was stressed at all levels of command.<sup>33</sup> When AirLand Battle was adapted as the doctrine for the U.S. Army in 1982, the concepts of initiative, resourceful leaders, mission orders, and

commander's intent were officially recognized. Many of these ideas had existed before, but were overshadowed by the doctrine of the 1970's.

#### The German Influence.

As mentioned in the previous section, the U.S. Army borrowed some of the ideas of initiative and operating within the commander's intent from the German experience of World War II. The doctrine writers tried to incorporate many of the concepts of "Auftragstaktik" mission tactics into the AirLand Battle doctrine. An excellent summary of the concept of "Auftragstaktik" is given by Lieutenant Colonel Walter von Lossow in his article entitled "Mission-Type Tactics versus Order-Type Tactics." Lieutenant Colonel Lossow reenforces the principles of "Auftragstaktik" set forth in the 1933 Truppenfuhrung and the 1972 version of HDv 100/200, The Command and Control System.<sup>34</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Lossow states that "Auftragstaktik establishes a framework within which the mission, the authority for its accomplishment, and the sense of responsibility of the individual charged are in harmony."<sup>35</sup> He gives an excellent discussion on the merits, problems, and preconditions of the "Auftragstaktik" system. Two of the preconditions for mission tactics are uniformity in thinking and reliability of action. These can only occur when common training and education are established. One of the disadvantages to this system is the amount of time required to build such a foundation in junior and senior leaders. Another

disadvantage is that junior leaders may make mistakes while learning. These must be underwritten by senior leaders if this concept is to work. However, the advantages of this approach outweigh the disadvantages. A few of the benefits of such a system include: leaders at all echelons can analyze their own situation; transmission of orders takes much less time; individuals are more motivated to accomplish their assigned tasks; and individuals can take the appropriate measures given the actual situation on the ground.<sup>36</sup>

The 1933 version of the German manual, Truppenfuehrung, places great emphasis on the leadership required during combat. As a part of this leadership, the manual urges commanders to "permit freedom of action to his subordinates insofar that this does not endanger the whole scheme."<sup>37</sup> The leaders and subordinate share the responsibility for the accomplishment of the mission. The leader has the responsibility to give the subordinate the mission and situation in clear terms so that the subordinate understands what the objective is of the operation. The subordinate has the responsibility to carry out the mission, but is not locked into one course of action. If the situation changes, the subordinate could change the mission based on his commander's will.<sup>38</sup> This is not done lightly; the subordinate takes full responsibility for his actions.

Close attention is also paid to the communications orders. Short, clear, and complete orders are stressed in

Truppenfuhrung. Language that is simple to understand by subordinates should be used whenever possible. The format of the German operations order centered around the intentions of the commander. The Germans believed that the intentions of the commander were "essential to the accomplishment of the end sought."<sup>39</sup>

Many of the elements of our current doctrine can be traced directly back to the concepts in the 1933 Truppenfuhrung. It is important to remember, as Lieutenant Colonel Lossow stated in his article, "Auftragstaktik does not consist of an isolated, independent principle."<sup>40</sup> The system is more than just how orders were issued; the idea of "Auftragstaktik" involved an entire educational system. This system must be practiced during time of peace if it is to work during combat. Common doctrine, language, training technique(s), trust, respect, and philosophy were shared between the leader and the subordinate.<sup>41</sup>

In John M. Vermillion's monograph, "Tactical Implications of the Adoption of Auftragstaktik for the Command and Control on the AirLand Battlefield," warns that the U.S. Army has not fully adopted a decentralized command and control system based on the "Auftragstaktik" principles. He says that although the U.S. Army realizes that a decentralized system of command and control is needed to operate on the AirLand Battlefield, only a superficial understanding of such a system exists within the U.S. Army.<sup>42</sup>

### Contemporary Thought.

The inclusion of the concept of mission orders in the 1982 and 1986 versions of Field Manual 100-5 generated much discussion concerning the commander's intent. I believe that the doctrine writers and the leadership of the U.S. Army, at that time, did not want to repeat the mistakes made during the Vietnam era. In Martin van Creveld's book, Command in War, is an excellent account of the influence of technology and organization on command during the Vietnam war. Mr. van Creveld speaks of the "misdirected telescope" used during the war.<sup>43</sup> He states that during each period of history, a favorite piece of technology is used in order to gain an appreciation for what is occurring on the battlefield. During the Vietnam war, the piece of technology used for this purpose was the helicopter. With it, commanders at every level could move rapidly to the location of engagements and directly influence the operations on the ground. Unfortunately, this was carried to an extreme. Often there were only one or two actions occurring at any given time. This allowed very senior commanders to concentrate their attention in one area. Mr. van Creveld relates how company commanders were often supervised by battalion, brigade, and even division commanders hovering above them in helicopters.<sup>44</sup> In some instances, the senior commanders wanted the commander on the ground to tune in their frequency and give an update of the situation. Instead of just monitoring the situation, the senior

commanders would give detailed advice to the commander on the ground. On some occasions, a general would be maneuvering a company on the ground.<sup>45</sup> The U.S. Army leadership in the 1980's wanted very much to prevent this misuse of command and control in the future. It saw mission orders and the "Auftragstaktik" concept as a way to allow more freedom of action to subordinates.

William S. Lind's book, Maneuver Warfare, discusses the concept of "Auftragstaktik" and the commander's intent in terms of "contracts between superiors and subordinates."<sup>46</sup> Mr. Lind describes contracts of different lengths - one long-term and the other short-term. The commander's intent is the long-term contract; it describes what the commander wants to have happen to the enemy and the final results he wants to have happen. The mission is the short-term contract. It tells what is to be accomplished, but leaves how to to the subordinate.<sup>47</sup> He further describes how far a subordinate can go in accomplishing the mission assigned. Mr. Lind says that the subordinate cannot just do whatever he wants to on the battlefield. The subordinate's actions must be within the intent of the higher commander. The commander may even suggest possible solutions to the mission, and the subordinate should follow the suggestions as closely. The key point offered is that when the situation changes, the subordinate must be able to change his actions accordingly, acting within the overall intentions of the commander.<sup>48</sup> Mr. Lind's points

are well taken; a cursory review of mission orders might lead one to believe that the subordinate has total freedom to act. This is not so; the subordinate must act within the overall plan and the intentions of the higher commander.

Major John Vermillion's monograph, "Tactical Implications of the Adoption of Auftragstaktik for Command and Control of the AirLand Battlefield," reenforces many of Mr. Lind's points concerning the commander's intent. Major Vermillion states: "The intent invariably affords the subordinate two levels down additional courses of action."<sup>49</sup> He also says the intent statement adds to and clarifies the mission statement. If the subordinate understands the intent of his higher commanders at least two levels up, he will be able to develop additional courses of action when the situation does not occur as planned.<sup>50</sup> A very important and often overlooked point highlighted in the monograph is that the communication of intent is difficult especially during combat conditions. Often leaders say things that are not well thought out when they are under pressure. This is why is it important for the subordinate to carefully analyze the intent of his commander and seek additional clarification when needed.<sup>51</sup> Again, the notion of feedback is applied to the issuance of a commander's intent.

An excellent discussion of what intent is and what it does for the commander and subordinate is provided by Edward J. Filiberti. His article, "Command, Control, and the



Commander's Intent" in Military Review, states that intent is the "commander's statement of strategy."<sup>52</sup> Mr. Filiberti goes on to say that the commander's intent is a means of measuring success on the battlefield. He also states that the commander's intent lays the groundwork for the mission statement and the concept of the operation. This is noteworthy because it is the intent, not the mission statement, that sets the terms for success. The article states that the commander must tell the subordinate "why" in the intent statement. It is this "why" that allows the subordinate to exercise the initiative required for success. The author also suggests that the intent should be given before the plan is made. He says that the intent "sets the stage" for the operation.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Major Vermillion's work makes the point that the commander's intent must come before the Estimate of the Situation.<sup>54</sup>

One of the most important articles written during the last few years is by General John W. Foss, then Commander of TRADOC. In his article "Command" which appeared in Military Review, General Foss gives his philosophy of command and the role of control and communications. General Foss's article embodies much of the current thought on the commander's intent. The general sees computers, communications, and control as tools to assist the commander to perform the function of command. He states that a "command philosophy is built around three precepts: vision, freedom of action, and

responsibility."<sup>55</sup> In his article, he equates the commander's intent to the commander's vision of the battlefield. He says that the commander's intent is not meant to restrict the subordinate, but should allow the subordinate freedom of action to accomplish the mission. If the subordinate understands the intent of his higher commanders, he can take advantage of opportunities on the battlefield and not have to wait for orders.<sup>56</sup> General Foss sees mission tactics and the proper use of the commander's intent as a way to allow freedom of action to subordinates. Responsibility is also given to subordinates in terms of supporting the main effort. A commander who has been given the role of the main effort may have more freedom of action than commanders who must support the main effort. It is the higher commander who must allocate responsibilities to subordinates.<sup>57</sup> General Foss reinforces the point that mission orders do not allow subordinates unbridled freedom of action. It is the higher commander's responsibility to place boundaries on the action of subordinates; by doing so, he places responsibility on them for their actions. It is within the commander's intent statement that the foundation for the concept of operations is laid and the beginning of battlefield synchronization appears.

#### Current Doctrine.

Although this thesis concentrates at the brigade level of command and below; a review of Field Manual 100-5, the U.S. Army's keystone doctrinal manual, is imperative to the

understanding of current doctrine. The commander's intent is referred to extensively throughout Field Manual 100-5; unfortunately, a concise definition is never given in the manual. The manual states that "it is imperative that the overall commander's intent and concept of operations be understood throughout the force."<sup>58</sup> Also, subordinates are instructed to act on their own initiative within the framework of the commander's intent."<sup>59</sup> The authors of this manual place a strong emphasis on soldiers taking the initiative within the commander's intent, but they never give specifics as to how subordinates gain initiative and freedom of action from the commander's intent statement. Additionally, the authors do not provide guidance as to what the commander's intent should look like. The main contribution that Field Manual 100-5 makes to the doctrine of commander's intent is that the manual establishes the intent as a prerequisite for soldiers to gain initiative and freedom of action. Both commander's intent and mission type orders are emphasized throughout the manual, but a direct relationship is never established.

Unfortunately, the manual which should contain the specifics of commander's intent doctrine, Field Manual 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations, addresses the topic of the commander's intent only once in describing the concept of

operations paragraph in the following manner:

This is a statement of the commander's visualization of the execution of an operation from start to completion - how the selected course of action is to be accomplished. It accurately provides subordinates the commander's intent in order that mission accomplishment is possible in the time available and in the absence of additional communications or further instructions. The concept clarifies the purpose of the operation and is stated in sufficient detail to ensure appropriate action by subordinates.<sup>60</sup>

Written in May 1984, Field Manual 101-5 is currently being revised. When the definitions given in Field Manual 101-5 are compared to the ones given in Field Manual 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols, it is easy for the reader to get confused. Field Manual 101-5-1 is a supporting manual to Field Manual 101-5. Field Manual 101-5-1, written in October 1985, gives a cursory definition to commander's intent by defining it as the "[c]ommander's vision of the battle - how he expects to fight and what he expects to accomplish."<sup>61</sup> The manual then refers the reader to the definition of the concept of operation, which is much the same as the definition given in Field Manual 101-5. The concept of the operation and the commander's intent are so intermixed, it is hard to distinguish between them. All the current manuals mentioned thus far fail to give sufficient detail for a commander to understand what a commander's intent statement should look like.

Upon reviewing current doctrinal manuals at the brigade level and below, I believe that the U.S. Army, as a

whole, recognizes the need for a sound commander's intent, but doctrine varies depending upon which manual is referred to. The only doctrinal publication at the brigade level or below which refers in any detail to the commander's intent was Field Manual 7-72, Light Infantry Battalion, which stated that the commander's intent "is usually the purpose of the operation, and it represents a shared vision of the outcome."<sup>62</sup> The U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, maintains in most of its publications that the intent at the brigade level and below is the same as the purpose of the operation. This opinion is also taught in the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses.<sup>63</sup>

#### Emerging Doctrine.

The U.S. Army's emerging doctrine provides much of the detail missing in its current doctrine. The foundation for the U.S. Army's emerging doctrine was established by General Foss in September 1990, then Commander of the U.S. Army's TRADOC. While attending a session on the AirLand Battle Future at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, General Foss approved the following definition of the commander's intent:

**Intent is the commander's stated vision which defines: the purpose of an operation; the end state with respect to the relationship among force, the enemy, and the terrain; and briefly how the end state will be achieved by the force as a whole.<sup>64</sup>**

It is interesting to note that at the same conference which General Foss approved the above definition of the commander's intent, he also stated that "definitions, purposes, and

relationships of the commander's vision, his intent, and the concept of the operation needed to be more clearly established in doctrine."<sup>65</sup>

The definition which General Foss approved requires the commander to place key pieces of information into the intent statement. Much of this information is gained through an analysis of the situation and requires an initial concept as to how the operation will be accomplished. The definition also adds much of the substance missing in the current doctrine. It is not surprising that the Command and General Staff Officer College (CGSOC) is already teaching this approved definition of intent to its students.<sup>66</sup>

Additionally, the draft version of Field Manual 101-5 contains the definition of commander's intent approved by General Foss. This manual also states that the commander must provide his intent as part of his guidance to the staff.<sup>67</sup> This is a key point that current doctrinal literature overlooks. Instead of the commander issuing his intent after the staff develops courses of action, now the staff develops courses of action based on the commander's initial intent. This procedure is also taught to the CGSOC students as a part of their tactics instruction.<sup>68</sup>

#### Summary.

One of the tactical commander's most important leadership challenges is to communicate intent to subordinates. This process became formalized in 1982, with

the publication of Field Manual 100-5. Intent doctrine has continued to evolve to the present day; however, current U.S. Army doctrine is not adequate to serve the needs of field commanders. This shortcoming is corrected in emerging doctrine. The draft version of Field Manual 101-5 lays the foundation for emerging U.S. Army doctrine for intent.

The U.S. Army's current doctrine is being replaced by doctrine not yet printed in publications. The U.S. Army is using emerging doctrine concerning the commander's intent as current doctrine because it provides the detail required by commanders in the field. Because emerging doctrine is treated as approved doctrine by a large part of the U.S. Army leadership, it will be used as current doctrine in this thesis.

## ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 13.

<sup>2</sup>FM 22-100, Military Leadership, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1990), 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>6</sup>FM 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1987), ii.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr., In Search of Excellence, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1982), 82.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>16</sup>Perry M. Smith, Taking Charge, (New York: Avery Publishing Group, 1988), 5.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>18</sup>Jay A. Conger, The Charismatic Leader, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1989), 38.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>20</sup>Ernest L. Stech, Leadership Communication, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Inc., 1983), 28.



<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>22</sup>Brent D. Ruben and Richard W. Budd, Human Communication Handbook, (New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1975), 169.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>John L. Romjue, From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982, (Fort Leavenworth Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1984), iii.

<sup>25</sup>John L. Romjue, From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982, (1984), 51-53.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>34</sup>Robert J. Tezza, "Teaching Mission Orders in Officers Advanced Course Instruction: Reality or Myth?", (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Thesis, Master of Military Arts and Science, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 30.

<sup>35</sup>Walter Von Lossow, "Mission-Type Tactics Versus Order-Type Tactics", Military Review, Vol. LVII, No. 6, (June 1977), 88.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>37</sup>Truppenfuhrung (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 5.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>40</sup>Walter von Lossow, "Mission-Type Tactics versus Order-Type Tactics", Military Review, (1977), 88.

<sup>41</sup>John M. Vermillion, "Tactical Implications of the Adoption of Auftragstaktik for the Command and Control on the AirLand Battlefield", Monograph, (School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Command and General Staff College, 1985), 1-9.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, Abstract.

<sup>43</sup>Martin van Creveld, Command In War, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1985), 251.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>46</sup>William S. Lind, Maneuver Warfare, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1985), 13.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>49</sup>John M. Vermillion, "Tactical Implications of the Adoption of Auftragstaktik for the Command and Control on the AirLand Battlefield", (1986), 23.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>Edward J. Filiberti, "Command, Control and the Commander's Intent", Military Review, Vol. LXVII, No. 8, (August 1987), 55-59.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>John M. Vermillion, "Tactical Implications of the Adoption of Auftragstaktik for Command and Control on the AirLand Battlefield", (1985), 22.

<sup>55</sup>John W. Foss, "Command", Military Review, Vol. LXX, No. 5, (May 1990), 3.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 4.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., G-14.

<sup>61</sup>FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols, (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 1985), 1-17.

<sup>62</sup>FM 7-72, Light Infantry Battalion, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1987), 2-5.

<sup>63</sup>This comment is based on recent personal experience as an instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Lesson plans are in the possession of the author.

<sup>64</sup>Memorandum For Record, "Commander's Intent", (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 14 September 1991).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>ST 100-9, Techniques and Procedures for Tactical Decisionmaking, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: The United States Army Command and General Staff College, June 1991), 5-4.

<sup>67</sup>FM 101-5, Draft, Staff Organization and Operations, (September 1991), 4-27.

<sup>68</sup>ST 100-9, Techniques and Procedures for Tactical Decisionmaking, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: The United States Command and General Staff College, June 1991), 2-5.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction.

This chapter provides the techniques and procedures used to confirm or disprove the following hypothesis:

**The current/emerging U.S. Army doctrine for the commander's intent statement facilitates the issuance of mission orders.**

The Historical Research Design Method is used in this study to answer the above stated hypothesis. This method examines data obtained from historical records.<sup>1</sup> This research design requires four steps. First, select the population. Next, develop and define categories in order to organize observations of orders in the sample population.<sup>2</sup> Third, establish the presence or absence of current/emerging doctrine characteristics for the commander's intent in the orders observed in the sample. Finally, systematically organize and present data so that valid conclusions are drawn. Chapter Four analyzes and interprets data produced by this method.

#### Assumptions.

This study recognizes certain factors, which are not addressed during the investigation, that affect the performance of the units participating in the training at the

U.S. Army's training centers. The command climate, personality of the commander, and the experience of the staff and junior leaders are a few of these factors. Certain assumptions can be made based on a common doctrine, the U.S. Army's institutional training system, and approximately the same quality of soldiers and leaders throughout the U.S. Army. The following assumptions are essential to any findings made concerning this study:

1. Leaders want subordinates to demonstrate initiative, in training and combat, in accordance with the concept of the operation and the commander's intent.
2. The commanders, leaders, and soldiers participating in the training examined in this study have approximately the same level of training and motivation to accomplish the assigned missions.

#### **Population.**

The primary objective in choosing a sample population is to ensure that it adequately represents the population as a whole. This is essential if the conclusions made from the sample population are to apply to the general population. The general population in this case is all the units in the U.S. Army at the brigade level and below; this is a very large and diverse group. Obviously, it is not possible to examine such a large population in this study; instead a representative sample population was chosen in order to facilitate an in-depth analysis.

### Conditions.

The most suitable conditions to study a commander's intent statement would be actual combat. Information on combat operations is available to the researcher, unfortunately, most of this information is still classified. Additionally, much of this information does not provide the detailed information required for this research.

The Combat Training Centers (CTCs) are designed to replicate as closely as possible the conditions of combat against an Opposing Force (OPFOR). An extensive system of Observer Controls (OCs) and electronic hardware assist in the gathering and processing of data from units which participate in the training. Much of this information is reasonably available upon request from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) and the Army Research Institute (ARI). The data is packaged in the form of After Action Reports (AARs) that provide the basic conditions, missions, and results from the training. It is for these reasons that the CTCs are selected to provide the sample population for this research.

The CTCs have existed for several years. Hundreds of units have conducted training at these centers. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to sample all the units which have conducted training at the CTCs, therefore, a representative sample population is selected to test the proposed hypothesis.

The two CTCs from which the sample population is

selected are the JRTC at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and NTC at Fort Irwin, California. A third CTC exists at Hohenfelds, West Germany, but information is not available for evaluation from the CALL concerning this training center. When the term CTC is referred to in this thesis, it applies only to the JRTC and the NTC. A representative sample population is still achieved from the two selected CTCs because a good cross-section of the entire U.S. Army routinely attends these two training centers.

The JRTC provides training to primarily light infantry units under a low-to-mid intensity training environment. The NTC focuses on mechanized and armor units in a mid-to-high intensity environment. There are mixed rotations consisting of heavy/light and light/heavy units at each of these CTCs. Both the JRTC and the NTC provide realistic, stressful training under as close to combat conditions as can be expected in a peacetime training environment.

The sample population selected consists of two different unit rotations at the JRTC and the NTC for a total of four. The two rotations at the JRTC were light forces. The rotations at the NTC consisted of one heavy forces rotation and one heavy/light rotation. This sample population is reasonably representative of the entire population.

The CTCs accommodate brigade-size units for training, but the focus for evaluation by OCs is at the battalion level and below. The AARs provided to the battalions are written in

order that the battalion and company commanders may identify trends to improve training. OCs observe down to the platoon level. Unfortunately, the lowest level that the AARs provide information and comments to is at the company. Orders at the company level are not kept on file at the CALL. It is for these reasons, that this research concentrates at the battalion level of command. During each rotation, this study investigates one battalion during two different missions. Concentrating at the battalion level still allows conclusions to be drawn from different levels of command.

Units participating at the CTCs receive from five to seven separate combat missions to accomplish. Each of these operations is studied in depth, and they provide the basis for the AARs at the end of each mission. This study researches two missions during each rotation at the CTCs. The missions are chosen to provide a good sampling of the training conducted at the CTC's.

#### Parameters.

Certain parameters restricted the size of the total population available for investigation. First, only rotations on file at the CALL were considered for research. Second, only rotations from 1988 to present were considered. This is an attempt to acquire the most recent information for the study. The last parameter that was placed on the research population is that only rotations containing orders which included a commander's intent were considered.



### Measurement.

This thesis must measure if a relationship exists between the characteristics of the current/emerging doctrine for the commander's intent statement and the issuance of mission orders during certain rotations at CTCs. The specific characteristics which were applied to the intent statement issued were derived from the current/emerging commander's intent doctrine. The chart at Figure 1 illustrates a numerical value for the characteristics chosen to be applied to the sample population. Listed below are the specific characteristics used in this methodology:

- #1 = The operation's purpose.
- #2 = The operation's desired end state (describing the relationship between the friendly force and the enemy force with respect to their capabilities and the terrain).
- #3 = How the force as a whole will achieve the desired end state. (By using doctrinal concepts, the "how" remains broad yet concise. The commander states the appropriate form of maneuver, defensive pattern, or type of retrograde operation he expects his force to use).<sup>3</sup>

The characteristics stated above are contained in the draft version of Field Manual 101-5. They establish the basis for current and emerging doctrine in the U.S. Army.

After the rotations are examined for the presence or absence of these specific intent characteristics, the operations orders issued for each operation are measured against a set standard to determine to what degree the order was a mission type order. Categories established to measure

freedom of action to subordinates during operations are listed below:

- A. Mission Type Order: Subordinates, acting within the commander's intent, demonstrate initiative throughout the operation.
- B. Favorable Type Order: Subordinates, acting within the commander's intent, demonstrate some initiative during the operation, but to a lesser degree than a mission order would have allowed.
- C. Restrictive Type Order: Although not totally restricted by the order, subordinates demonstrated very little initiative during the operation.
- D. Controlling Type Order: Subordinates' freedom of action was totally restricted by the order during the operation. Subordinates demonstrated no initiative during the order.

The above categories are somewhat subjective. However, orders can be classified as to the degree they allow freedom of action based on comments from the OCs and the action of subordinates during the operations. The chart used to classify orders into categories is illustrated at Figure 2.

The comparison of current/emerging doctrine characteristics to the degree that the orders facilitate freedom of action in subordinates provides the basic data for analysis. The chart used to compare the relationship between the orders issued and the intent characteristics is illustrated at Figure 3.

### **Bias.**

Bias is defined as "any influence, condition, or set of conditions that singularly or together distorts the data from what may have been obtained under the conditions of pure chance. Furthermore, bias is any influence that may have disturbed the randomness by which the choice of a sample population has been selected."<sup>4</sup> Given this definition, certain bias must be acknowledged in this study of intent. First, the sample population size is extremely small and the conditions under which this research was conducted is unique to the environments of the CTCs. Given the small population, much effort is given to ensure that a representative sample is investigated. Secondly, although efforts were made to acquire a representative sample, the availability of information at the CALL had a minor influence on the specific sample population. Finally, much of the information for this research is based on reports from OCs at the CTCs. Although these are firsthand accounts of the actual events, the personality, experience, and other related factors could introduce bias into the narratives of the reports.

### **Reliability.**

Reliability addresses the accuracy of the survey. Accuracy is ensured by designing simple, straightforward techniques for the research. Also, to the greatest extent possible, internal critical analysis is applied to the comments of the OCs. This process basically looks for any

contradictions in the AARs.

**Validity.**

The term validity "is concerned with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument."<sup>5</sup> In other words, are we measuring what we really want to? Face and internal validity evidence are used to determine the soundness of this study.

Face validity relies on the subjective judgment of the researcher. It requires that two questions be answered to the researcher's best ability. First, are we measuring what we want to? Secondly, is the sample representative of the trait or behavior being measured?<sup>6</sup> The first question is answered by stating that the categories and characteristics are designed specifically to answer the proposed hypothesis. Furthermore, although the sample size is necessarily small, this does not affect the relationship between the commander's intent statement and issuance of mission orders.

Internal validity asks one primary question, "what do the words mean?"<sup>7</sup> In this study, the question pertains to the meaning of the words the commanders use to convey their intent to subordinates. Frequently, commanders clarify their intent statements by issuing other orders or guidance to subordinate leaders. Whenever possible, multiple orders or instructions by the same commander are examined in order to obtain a correct interpretation of the commanders' intent statements.

**Summary.**

The methodology used to confirm or deny the stated hypothesis is the Historical Research Design. This procedure relies on the investigation of historical records in order to answer the stated hypothesis:

**The current/emerging U.S. Army doctrine for the commander's intent statement facilitates the issuance of mission orders.**

# I N T E N T   T R A I T S

TRAIT	JRTC						NTC					
	R1			R2			R1			R2		
	01	02		01	02		01	02		01	02	
#1 (PURPOSE)												
#2 (ENDSTATE)												
#3 (HOW)												

R = Rotation  
O = Operations Order

FIGURE #1

# MISSION ORDER SCALE

CATEGORY	JRTC						NTC			
	R1		R2		R1		R2		R1	
	01	02	01	02	01	02	01	02	01	02
A (MISSION)										
B (FAVORABLE)										
C (RESTRICTIVE)										
D (CONTROLLING)										

R = Rotation  
O = Operations Order

FIGURE #2

**C O M P A R I S O N   O F :  
I N T E N T   T R A I T S   /   M I S S I O N   O R D E R S**

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER OF ORDERS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRAITS PER ORDER
A (MISSION)		
B (FAVORABLE)		
C (RESTRICTIVE)		
D (CONTROLLING)		

**FIGURE #3**



### ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup>Paul Westmeyer, A Guide for Use in Planning and Conducting Research Projects, (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1981), 35.

<sup>2</sup>I borrowed the idea of establishing categories in order to organize data from Major Robert J. Tezza; he used this technique in his thesis, "Teaching Mission Orders in Officer Advance Course Instruction: Reality or Myth?", (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Master of Military Arts and Science, The United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 81.

<sup>3</sup>FM 101-5-1, Draft, Staff Organization and Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1991), 1-5.

<sup>4</sup>Paul D. Leedy, Practical Research, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 166.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 126.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction.

This chapter explains, interprets, and analyzes the data gathered from CTCs. The first section explains the data and provides background information relevant to answering the hypothesis. This section provides the necessary information for analysis. An explanation of collected data is organized by CTC, rotation, and operations orders. Each operations order is discussed in detail and rationale is provided as to how and why the data was categorized in the charts provided in the second section of this chapter. Due to an agreement with the CALL, no specific unit or date is referred to in this thesis; only generic units and dates are used. Therefore, the mission statements and commanders' intent statements in this chapter are purged of specific units and dates. Additionally, the endnotes for this chapter make no specific reference to dates, units, or documents. The second section in this chapter interprets and analyzes the data gathered. Finally, a summary addresses the proposed hypothesis.

### Explanation of Collected Data.

#### Rotation #1 JRTC.

The forces participating in this rotation at the JRTC consisted of a light infantry battalion organized with four rifle companies and a total of nine rifle platoons. The rotation was ten days long and consisted of three phases: Phase 1 (search and attack) D-day to D+2; Phase 2 (hasty attack) D+3 to D+5; Phase 3 (deliberate attack) D+6 to D+10. The two phases or tactical operations investigated during this rotation were a search and attack and a deliberate attack. Both tactical operations were conducted in a low-intensity environment against an OPFOR. A notional brigade headquarters provided information and orders to the battalion to create a realistic command and training environment.

#### Operations Order #1.

The battalion's mission was to conduct a deployment to a host nation support base in a notional country called Cortina, move into a tactical assembly area, and then conduct a search and attack operation in its assigned area of operations on D-Day.

The initial battalion area of operations was approximately thirty-six to thirty-eight square kilometers, divided into sixteen smaller zones for command and control purposes. Later, three boundary changes expanded the area of operation by fifteen square kilometers which was further subdivided into six additional zones.

On D-2, the battalion sent its scouts and an infantry platoon into the area of operations to detect the enemy's movement into the area of operations. The battalion moved into its tactical assembly area on D-2. Movement to the passage points began on D-1 and the companies began moving into the battalion area of operations on D-Day.

The first two days of operations were characterized by squad and platoon search operations with moderate enemy contact. Contacts were usually made with enemy squads or smaller elements supported by 81mm mortars. The enemy usually broke contact and harassed the battalion with snipers and ambushes along the main supply routes. The battalion quickly seized the initiative from the enemy by destroying one of the two 81mm mortars and causing the enemy to relocate its company and battalion supply points as the friendly force battalion moved into the area of operations. Heavy contact causing significant casualties in one company hampered the battalion's operations and the initiative was lost to the enemy as the focus turned to reconstitution.

During this mission, the battalion suffered one hundred and fifty-three (twenty-six percent) casualties of which forty-six (fifty-two percent) died of wounds and six (four percent) were a result of fratricide. The battalion lost two gun jeeps to mines, one STINGER team, and shot down one friendly F-111 aircraft. The enemy lost fifty-one soldiers and had seventeen captured. The enemy's resupply

operations were hampered by the loss to close air support of several cache points and the original battalion supply point. The enemy supply losses included one 81mm mortar with sixty-seven rounds, one SA-14 anti-aircraft missile, one M60 machine gun, three radios, three night observation devices, eighteen rucksacks, and forty-seven meals.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, the battalion executed the plan well. Aggressive execution of the search plan forced the enemy to react to friendly operations. The battalion destroyed or captured all of the enemy air defense assets, one 81mm mortar, and all the enemy engineers. These operations forced the enemy to move its company and battalion supply points. Despite initially seizing the initiative, the friendly battalion failed to exploit its success because of poor reporting.

Another reason that the battalion did not exploit its success may be that the subordinate commanders did not understand the battalion commander's intent for the operation. Task force orders were often confusing for the company commanders, particularly the fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) issued after the operation had started. The battalion commander usually issued the order separately to each company commander. This prevented interaction between commanders and made it more difficult to visualize the entire battalion operation. Additionally, as the battalion commander briefed each company commander, the order was slightly modified. All

of the modifications did not reach each of the company commanders causing the battalion to operate with company commanders executing slightly different concepts of the operation.

Although the battalion conducted a good initial analysis, the company commanders' analyses were weak. Company commanders often repeated the situation, battalion mission, and the battalion commander's intent instead of tailoring them to the company situation. Company commanders did not analyze information to determine how it affected their units.<sup>2</sup>

**Operations Order #1 - Discussion.**

The battalion used a "fill-in-the-blank" matrix order format. The order provided essential information to subordinate companies and special platoons. The battalion's mission was stated as shown below:

**The battalion conducts passage of lines on D-Day in order to locate and destroy enemy log bases, C-3 sites, and forces in the area of operations. On order, reinforce the host nation forces.<sup>3</sup>**

In addition to the mission statement, the commander gave his intent as follows:

**Focus on enemy intelligence routes and lines of communications early. If the enemy succeeds in moving into our area of operations, shift focus to lines of communications, log sites, command and control, mortars, and air defense artillery. When searching, operate as squads and teams. Mass as platoons and greater only to attack. Keep the enemy off balance by searching from dawn to dusk and conducting multiple small unit ambushes at night. Protect the force by using stealth, deliberate movements, and**

austere logistics. Criteria for success: enemy is prevented from establishing company or larger log base in our area of operations; enemy command and control at the platoon level and above is destroyed; all enemy indirect fire systems in the area are destroyed; no enemy elements platoon size or larger move through our area; and friendly forces do not violate the tactical rules of engagement or alienate the host nation forces or population.<sup>4</sup>

The commander's intent statement for this order was extremely long and did not contain the three traits required by current/emerging doctrine. A purpose was given in the mission statement, but one was not provided in the intent statement. The end state for the mission was in terms of criteria for success. This is what the commander wanted to accomplish in his area of operations when the operation was completed. Furthermore, the commander gave some guidance as to how to accomplish the mission. Figure #1 charts this information.

#### Subordinate Actions.

Actions at the company level reflect that company commanders did not understand the overall purpose for the operation. Of the four companies assigned to the battalion for the operation, none executed the mission as the battalion commander wanted. Each company was assigned Named Areas of Interest (NAI's) to focus on during the search phase of the operation. In each case, the company focused on the NAI to such a degree that little else was accomplished. None of the companies devised a plan to attack the enemy. The friendly

force never concentrated combat power. This contributed to the high casualty rates for the friendly forces.

The OC's comments indicate that the company commanders did not understand what was expected of them or their units. Furthermore, the company commanders did not issue intent statements for their own orders. This lead to confusion at lower levels within the companies. One OC reported that "the soldiers seldom knew the intent of the mission or the friendly or enemy situation."<sup>3</sup> Another OC stated that the company he was evaluating "failed to understand the battalion commander's intent and purpose."<sup>4</sup> This was probably because the battalion commander did not state the purpose for the operation in his intent. The fact that the company commanders did not understand the purpose of the operation at the battalion level had several major adverse consequences for the battalion. First was the issue of a high casualty rate. The battalion commander, in his intent, told the companies to operate at the squad and team level when conducting the search but mass at the platoon level to conduct the attack. This concept was never executed at the company level. In almost every instance, the companies not only searched but also attacked at the team and squad level. This contributed greatly to the high number of friendly casualties. Secondly, the companies were given NAI's to monitor; the fact that they almost exclusively observed these NAI's to the detriment of the remainder of their area of operations also indicated that



the intent for the overall operation was not clear to subordinate commanders.

Based upon the comments of the OCs and the actions of the subordinate commanders, this order is classified as a Category C Order - Restrictive Type Order. Figure 2 charts this information. The subordinates were not totally restricted by the operations order or the commander's intent. However, company commanders did not understand the commander's intent or the purpose of the operations. They concentrated too much on assigned NAI's and never concentrated favorable combat power against the enemy. Some individual soldier initiative was referred to in the After Action Report (AAR) by the OCs; this was mainly in the area of individual skills. Units and leaders demonstrated almost no initiative throughout the operation.

#### Operations Order #2.

The second mission examined in this rotation directed the battalion to attack using infiltration techniques and to destroy enemy forces on a designated objective. On order, the battalion was to continue the attack east. The infiltration began with a passage of lines.

The battalion issued its order which divided the objective into three smaller objectives and identified two intermediate objectives. The concept called for Company C (main effort) to attack the objective from the south; Company A (attached) to attack the eastern objective from the east;

Company A (organic) to occupy three ambush positions to the east; and Company B to attack the two northern intermediate objectives at a critical choke point. The scout platoon departed early to conduct reconnaissance of the northern objectives. The 81mm mortars would initially support from the Line of Departure/Line of Contact (LD/LC). An enemy chemical (non-persistent) air strike against the battalion assembly areas hindered attack preparations. Enemy aircraft attacked the same assembly area site the next day and destroyed the battalion tactical operations center and other command post elements. The battalion commander lost several key leaders, but was able to operate effectively from his alternate tactical operations center in the combat trains. A support team under the control of the headquarters company commander would follow on order to provide Class V, Class IV, and medical support to the battalion at the objective site. The headquarters company team had gun jeeps, engineers, and tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided missiles (TOWs) to help fight down the main supply route and defend against an expected armor counterattack.

Company A attacked first and seized its eastern objective with heavy losses. Company C attacked and occupied an abandoned village in the southern objective. Company B attacked and seized one of its two objectives (the other had been occupied without a fight).

Once the headquarters company team started to move down the main supply route, it met heavy resistance and many obstacles at the choke point in the vicinity of Company B's objective. After heavy fighting, the convoy arrived at the main objective. The area was soon under the control of the battalion. Consolidation and reorganization efforts were limited, and the unit was not properly prepared for the enemy counterattacks which occurred shortly after the friendly battalion occupied the objective. The enemy attack consisted of dismounted infantry attacks and a mechanized force of ten Soviet-Style Fighting Vehicles (BMP). The enemy reoccupied the objective area with a superior force and destroyed the friendly tactical actions center and several key leaders including the battalion commander and operations officer. Change of mission occurred about fifteen minutes later.

Several direct fire fratricide incidents occurred in and around the abandoned village when the enemy counterattack began. During this deliberate attack operation, the battalion suffered three hundred and sixty-six (sixty-one percent) casualties. Of the sixty-one percent casualties, at least thirty-eight (eleven percent) fratricide casualties occurred, and seventy-eight (thirty-five percent) died of their wounds. The enemy lost one hundred and sixty-six soldiers, eight BMPs, and one SA-14. The friendly battalion lost six TOWs/gun jeeps, one Dragon and one 60mm mortar.<sup>5</sup>

## Operations Order #2 - Discussion.

The battalion used the same matrix-type order that was used in the search and attack operation. The order was issued in a timely manner, but the order lacked detailed control measures for actions on the objectives. Also, the graphics did not match the commander's guidance; this caused much confusion among the company commanders.

The mission statement used by the battalion for the deliberate attack is stated below:

**The battalion infiltrates and attacks to destroy enemy forces on Objective (OBJ) POLK; on order defend OBJ POLK; on order attack to destroy enemy forces on OBJ ASHBY.<sup>6</sup>**

The commander gave intent as stated below:

**Rely on indirect fires and close air support to attrit and harass enemy forces on OBJs POLK and TYLER prior to infiltration. Travel light and move quickly to assault positions. Follow behind preparatory fires to rapidly disrupt and destroy enemy forces. Quickly move off the objective and defend against armor counterattacks using artillery fires and close-in ambushes.<sup>7</sup>**

The commander gave no purpose for the operation in his intent statement. The only purpose for the operation was given in the mission statement, which was to destroy enemy forces. No reference was made as to why this operation was important or how it related to other forces. An end state was prescribed by the commander when he told his companies to be in a defensive posture and be prepared to defend against armor counterattacks. Also, the commander gave very general guidance as to how to achieve this end state. He told his

units to quickly move off the objective and establish a defense. Therefore, this operations order contains two of the three traits of current/emerging doctrine prescribed for the commander's intent. The end state and how to achieve the end state are contained in the commander's intent statement for this operation, but the purpose for the operation is absent. Figure #1 summarizes this data.

#### Subordinate Actions.

A close examination of the companies' actions revealed that they did not understand the purpose of the operation or the overall battalion commander's intent. The Company A mission was to establish three anti-armor ambush positions to the east of OBJ POLK to block possible enemy counterattacks from the east. Once the objective was secured, the company was to move to a battle position and establish a hasty defense in order to prevent counterattacks from the east. Company A established the anti-armor ambushes and destroyed one enemy BMP. Once OBJ POLK was secured, the company commander issued a FRAGO for a hasty defense, but "did not execute a hasty defense prior to the enemy's counterattack, although resources were available."<sup>8</sup> Several of the comments from the OCs indicate that the company commander did not understand what was expected of him. For instance, "the commander failed to shift the main effort along the most probable enemy approach in the south."<sup>9</sup> The OC goes on to say that "this violated

the battalion commander's intent and gave enemy forces a clear avenue of approach into OBJ POLK."<sup>10</sup>

Company B's mission was to seize an intermediate objective named TYLER. The company accomplished the mission but with a very high casualty rate - fifty percent. The OCs stated that the company commander "did not always understand the mission or the battalion commander's intent."<sup>11</sup> The OCs also contribute poor synchronization to the company commander not issuing a clear mission or intent for his company. The company was slow to transition to the defense after seizing the objective. This is attributed to the company commander not understanding his mission.

Company C was the battalion's main effort with the mission of seizing OBJ POLK. The company seized the objective, but sustained heavy casualties. The company commander did not understand the time constraints of the operation, thus his company was not prepared when the enemy counterattacked and reclaimed OBJ POLK. The company failed in its mission to keep the enemy from retaking the objective.

The mission assigned to Company A (attached) was to seize a portion of OBJ POLK and to be prepared to assist Company C in its mission. Company A seized its objective, but had an eighty percent casualty rate. This made the company ineffective for the rest of the mission. Again, the OCs attribute this to the company commander because he did not understand what was expected of him. A good summary of the

company's mission performance was made when an OC stated "the company's plan lacked the detail necessary to accomplish a deliberate attack."<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the order, the subordinate commanders moved to exactly the positions prescribed by the battalion commander and the battalion's operations officer. On several occasions, the OCs made comments concerning the poor locations of the ambush site and the defensive positions. Also, it was clear that the company commanders did not understand the time constraints for establishing the defense after securing their objectives. The order was very restrictive in that it told subordinates where to go, but did not tell them why.

There was not a single instance where a subordinate commander or leader demonstrated independent action or initiative. Based on the comments from the OCs and the action of the subordinate leaders in the AAR, this order is classified as a restrictive type operations order. Figure #2 charts this information. The battalion commander did not intentionally restrict the actions of his subordinates, however, by not telling them the purpose of the battalion's mission or the purpose for the individual company missions, subordinate commanders did not have the information required to demonstrate independent action.

### Rotation #2 JRTC.

The unit participating in the training during this rotation consisted of a light infantry battalion reinforced with air defense, engineers, and ground surveillance radar, thus forming a task force. The task force had three companies with a total of nine platoons of infantry. The rotation was ten days long and consisted of four phases: Phase 1 (search and attack) D-day to D+2; Phase 2 (search and attack) D+2 to D+5; Phase 3 (defense) D+5 to D+8; Phase 4 (Deliberate Attack) D+8 to D+10. The two phases or tactical operations investigated during this rotation were Phases 1 and 3, the search and attack and the defense. Both tactical operations were conducted in a low-to-mid intensity environment against an OPFOR.

### Operations Order #1.

The task forces' mission was to conduct a two-platoon air assault to cover the landing zones egress corridors; airland the task force (-) on the landing zone; conduct a relief in place of host nation forces in the lodgement area; and then conduct offensive operations (search and attack) in the assigned area of operations to the east. The task force issued its order on D-2.

The task force area of operations was approximately fifty to fifty-two square kilometers divided into three company zones and a scout platoon zone. Company A was in the



north; Company B in the center; Company C in the south; and the Scout Platoon in the southeast.

Because of inclement weather, the task force landed at an alternate landing zone and conducted a wheeled movement to the airhead area. The three maneuver companies began occupying the airhead line on D-Day; the Scout Platoon also began its zone reconnaissance and surveillance missions.

The task force continued to secure the eastern portion of the brigade airhead line until the arrival of another infantry battalion. The task force was relieved of the airhead security line between D-Day and D+1. The task force then began its search and attack operations in zone, initially planning to rest during the day, and search and ambush during the hours of darkness.

The first two days of operations were characterized by squad and platoon search operations with moderate enemy contact. Contacts were usually made with enemy squad or smaller size elements supported with 81mm mortars. The majority of the contacts were made around and in a civilian populated village in Company C's zone. Company C suffered significant casualties as it tried to enter the village and make contact with the civilians. The mission ended on D+2.

During this phase of low-intensity conflict operations, the task force suffered ninety-five casualties of which thirty-three percent died of their wounds and nine percent were a result of fratricide. The task force captured

four enemy soldiers and lost one STINGER and two helicopters. Most casualties were a result of direct fire engagements (twenty-three). The enemy lost six soldiers as casualties. Enemy supply losses were insignificant.

The unit's overall effectiveness was hampered by a lack of sustained tactical command post operations. There were no graphic control measures within the airhead. The Tactical Operations Center's (TOC) tracking of subunits' exact positions hampered the decisionmaking process. Also, the mission analysis process required additional work. The commander's intent was not understood two levels down. The task forces' maneuvers lacked aggressiveness in execution. Reaction to enemy contact was piecemeal.<sup>13</sup>

#### Operations Order #1 - Discussion.

The task force used the standard five-paragraph operations order to implement the decision of the commander to subordinate leaders. The task force order stated the mission as follows:

**The Task Force conducts air assault operations to control the fight corridor; conducts airland operations; and conducts relief in place of host nation forces in the eastern sector, and conducts offensive operations in the task force area.<sup>14</sup>**

The commander expressed his intent as follows:

**My intent is to conduct air assault operations to overwatch the flight egress corridors followed by a rapid airland insertion with the remainder of the task force and conduct a relief in place of the host nation forces securing the eastern portion of the airhead until relieved. We will then conduct**

offensive operations in our area of operations to seek and destroy the enemy and disrupt his supply lines and command and control. We will also continue positive relations with the local civilian population.<sup>15</sup>

The commander's intent for this order practically restated the mission statement. Only one of the three traits for current/emerging doctrine is contained in this statement of intent. The commander describes how he plans to conduct the operation but fails to provide a desired end state and purpose for the operation. Figure #1 charts this information.

The commander gave no purpose for the operation in either his mission or intent statement. Furthermore, no desired end state was prescribed in the commander's intent. One result of having no stated purpose in the mission or intent statement was that the company commanders were not given enough focus in order to develop detailed plans. A common theme throughout the OC's comments at the company level was that company commanders "failed to conduct an effective Mission Enemy Terrain Troops - Time Available (METT-T) analysis."<sup>16</sup> The trend which was started at the battalion level of issuing orders which lacked details was carried over to the company level throughout the battalion.

#### **Subordinate Actions.**

The actions of the subordinate units in the battalion throughout the mission indicated that they did not understand what was important in the operation.

The battalion tasked Company A to conduct an air assault to insert its Antitank Section and a two man Fire Control Team forward in the company's area of operation. The company conducted the air move by C-130 transport aircraft. Company A then occupied three platoon assault positions to secure the airhead line. On order, the unit was relieved of its responsibility to secure the airhead. Company A then began search and attack operations in its assigned area of operations.

The OC's comments indicate that the leaders in Company A did not understand the mission or intent for the operation. One of the OCs said that "leaders did not develop tentative plans that addressed all critical tasks." The observer also states that the company leaders "failed to issue detailed orders."<sup>17</sup>

The lack of detail in Company A's orders has a direct effect on operations during the execution of the mission. On contact with the enemy, the unit became disorganized. The unit did not plan or rehearse how to react to contact with casualties. Leaders were slow to assess the situation and issue orders; as a result, the unit lost momentum. Company A suffered a fifty percent casualty rate during the operation.<sup>18</sup>

Company B received the battalion order and had about sixty-two hours to conduct planning and rehearsals. The battalion directed Company B to conduct an air movement in

their area of operations and then search and attack the enemy. During the operation, the company commander became a casualty and the executive officer took command of the operation. The company executive officer did not understand the operation. The company suffered over thirty casualties in an extremely short period of time; all attempts to continue the mission ceased on the first day of operations.<sup>19</sup>

A summary of Company B's actions by the OCs states that the planning, preparation, and execution of the search and attack was not conducted to standard. After receiving his mission, the company commander was still unclear as to his mission and not confident his unit could achieve the battalion commander's intent. As a result, the initial METT-T analysis was weak and was not updated when new information was received.

Small unit leaders in Company B lost control early in contacts with the enemy. Execution of basic battle drills was weak. Leaders failed to gain control during contact, and individual soldiers did not perform basic movement techniques to standard. Communication and reporting of the situation were weak. Company B suffered almost a one hundred percent casualty rate during the operation.

Company C, the third maneuver company in the battalion, received the battalion order and had thirty-nine hours to plan its portion of the operation. Company C's

mission was to conduct an air movement into its area of operations and then search for and attack the enemy.

The comments from the AAR for Company C are similar to those of Companies A and B. Leaders at all levels in Company C did not analyze the mission to determine implied and specified tasks. The lack of mission analysis resulted in incomplete plans that had to be changed continually. Additionally, leaders did not use the factors of METT-T during mission analysis. Leaders issued incomplete orders that did not define an intent or a scheme of maneuver. The commander's intent for operating during daylight and at night did not support the concept of search and attack and severely constrained the company from developing a sound tactical plan.<sup>20</sup>

The company suffered fifty-seven casualties out of a starting strength of one hundred and twenty-two soldiers. The enemy killed or wounded four friendly soldiers for every one of their casualties. This was largely because the leaders in Company C were not able to "determine the enemy's size and intentions and failed to maneuver their soldiers in response to the enemy's actions."<sup>21</sup>

The battalion did not accomplish its mission. The individual companies never really got started before they lost the momentum and initiative to the enemy. The comments from the observers clearly indicate a lack of understanding throughout the battalion of the battalion's mission and the

commander's intent. This lack of understanding carried over into the planning and execution of the companies. The battalion commander, by stating only how to accomplish the operation and without giving a purpose or desired end state, took much of the initiative from the leaders at lower levels. The fact that the company commanders failed to perform a detailed METT-T analysis and that they did not understand what was expected of them during the operations is directly related to the vague mission statement and commander's intent. The subordinate commanders were not given a focal point which would help define their own mission analysis and intent statements.

This order is classified as a controlling type order (charted at FIGURE #2) for several reasons. The first is the total lack of initiative demonstrated by subordinate leaders during the operation. Secondly, the effect of having no stated purpose prevented subordinate leaders from conducting proper planning. Lastly, the poor performance of the battalion as a whole prevented it from accomplishing its assigned missions. The total lack of focus in the commander's intent detracted from the operation; it had a desynchronizing effect throughout the operation.

#### Operations Order #2.

The battalion's mission during this phase of the rotation was to conduct a deliberate defense. The battalion organized to defend its sector with Company A forward with the

Scout Platoon, and Companies B and C abreast to the rear of Company A. Observation helicopters screened at the Battle Handover Line (BHL), and assault helicopters were positioned with a reserve platoon as a quick reactionary force. The battalion had numerous engagement areas planned throughout the sector. The TOW sections were positioned in Companies A and C's sectors. The obstacle plan was not fully integrated with the ground tactical and fire support plan. Heavy engineer equipment was not fully used. Preparations were also hindered when the TOC was destroyed by an enemy air strike and the battalion suffered heavy losses of key personnel and equipment.<sup>22</sup>

The battalion was not completely successful in destroying the enemy's reconnaissance. Although the enemy vehicles were stopped by being stuck in the mud or destroyed by mines, several reconnaissance elements were able to continue throughout the sector on foot. The Scout Platoon did not provide early warning, and the Motorized Rifle Battalion's (MRB) attack reached the BHL at first light and immediately hit a Family of Scatterable Mines (FASCAM) minefield losing two vehicles. All the friendly attack helicopters were destroyed by anti-aircraft missiles (GRAIL) and ground fire. The A-10s arrived on station in coordination with an OH-58 pilot and were able to effectively engage the tank column. The Close Air Support (CAS) and the FASCAM minefield continued to attrit the enemy column. These actions, coupled with



several vehicles lost to engine failure and poor trafficability, prevented the enemy from penetrating the battalion rear boundary with a cohesive force. The enemy artillery preparations, rolling barrages, and chemical attacks inflicted significant losses on the battalion including the battalion TOC and reserve force.

The battalion suffered a total of one hundred and ninety-four casualties of which twenty (fifteen percent) died of wounds and seventeen were the result of fratricide. The Battalion TOC was destroyed as were fourteen helicopters. The enemy suffered one hundred and thirteen casualties. The battalion destroyed or damaged two anti-aircraft weapon systems (ZSU23s), eight BMPs, three soviet reconnaissance vehicles (BRDM), and seven 7 T-62 tanks.<sup>23</sup>

A review of the OC's comments for the battalion indicates that many of the same problems were carried over from the first operation. The observers stated that "command and control was not effective after the TOC was destroyed."<sup>24</sup> They indicated that the staff did not support the commander. A key point made by the OCs was that the "[c]ommander's intent and the operation order was not clear."<sup>25</sup> Again, this affected the planning and execution of the operation throughout the battalion.

## Operations Order #2 - Discussion.

The battalion staff used a handwritten, standard operations order format to convey the decision of the commander to subordinate leaders. The mission statement for the operation was written as follows:

The battalion defends in sector to deny enemy penetration of Phase Line (PL) BLUE; fights the security battle in sector with aviation assets and well dug-in scouts/infantry in AT positions; and conducts aggressive counter reconnaissance to stop division and regimental reconnaissance teams at the BHL.<sup>26</sup>

The commander's intent statement for the operation was stated as follows:

My intent is to defeat the divisional and regimental reconnaissance effort of the enemy before they enter our sector through aggressive counter-reconnaissance and combine all assets to destroy him far forward in sector. Prepare and integrate obstacles and tank-killer teams and ambushes with natural obstacles to force him into our engagement areas.<sup>27</sup>

The battalion commander again restates the battalion's mission in his intent statement. The commander provides a desired end state in his intent being the destruction of the enemy's reconnaissance effort before they enter the battalion's sector of defense. He also states that he plans to accomplish this through aggressive counter-reconnaissance and by combining all available assets to destroy the enemy forward in sector. Unfortunately, the commander does not give a stated purpose for the operation. Basically, he does not tell why the force is destroying the enemy reconnaissance or

how this operation may assist in related or future operations. The commander also clutters the intent statement by telling the subordinate units to use natural obstacles to reinforce their anti-armor ambushes. This is something which is done in any operation. Figure #1 charts the fact that the battalion commander does not state a purpose for the operation.

#### Subordinate Actions.

The battalion tasked Company A to conduct a counter-reconnaissance forward in sector and to attrit the enemy as it passed through the sector. The company commander entered the assigned sector and defended with one platoon forward and the other two platoons in depth.

The company commander did not position the platoons so that they were mutually supporting with observation and direct fires. Each platoon established observation and listening posts. The unit did not, however, use security/reconnaissance patrols. Lack of friendly counter-reconnaissance permitted the enemy to move freely throughout the area. Prior to attack, the enemy pinpointed the majority of the friendly positions. Enemy forces allowed them to target and cause friendly indirect fire casualties.

The OCs again point to a lack of understanding on the A Company commander's part concerning the battalion commander's intent. One comment stated that "because of the lack of planning guidance from the battalion, the company occupied the sector without fully understanding the battalion

commander's concept for the defense."<sup>28</sup> This lead to improper positioning of forces resulting in a lack of depth in the defense. The lack of counter-reconnaissance activity by Company A is hard to explain especially after the battalion designated the company the counter-reconnaissance for the battalion. It is clear that the company commander did not understand the mission or what was expected of his unit.

During the execution of the defense, Company A suffered forty-seven casualties, approximately fifty percent of the force. Many of these casualties were caused by indirect fire after the enemy targeted the company positions.<sup>29</sup>

Company B received the battalion order and was given thirty-nine hours to conduct troop leading procedures. Upon entering the sector, the commander issued a warning order and conducted a leaders' reconnaissance. The leaders' reconnaissance was ineffective; it did not focus on a tentative plan. Shortly after the leaders' reconnaissance, the commander issued an operations order to the platoon leaders. The platoons then established defensive positions and security. The enemy's main attack passed through the company's sector with little effort. The company failed to damage, destroy, or deny penetration of the sector to any enemy vehicle.<sup>30</sup>

The OCs attribute much of the failure of Company B to the poor order issued by the battalion. The OC's comments

state "the initial battalion concept briefing did not contain sufficient detail to allow subordinates to initiate their own troop leading procedures."<sup>31</sup> An OC also says that "the company commander left the briefing without a clear understanding of the battalion's mission and the battalion commander's intent, mission essential tasks, general scheme of maneuver, or task organization."<sup>32</sup> Certainly much of the fault lies with the company commander for leaving the briefing without understanding the mission assigned to his unit. However, the battalion did little to give the company commander enough information to develop a comprehensive plan for the operation. During the execution of the operation, the company suffered twenty-nine casualties from a starting strength of one hundred and six soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

Company C received the battalion order and was given thirty-six hours to plan the operation. The company consisted of two infantry platoons and a platoon of engineers. The third infantry platoon assigned to the company was designated the battalion reserve and was positioned at the TOC under the control of the battalion commander. The company was tasked to occupy a company sector, prepare obstacles, and conduct a economy of force operation.<sup>34</sup>

Company C's performance during the operation was no better than the other companies in the battalion. The AAR refers to the point that the "commander and platoon leaders did not issue complete, timely orders for the defense."<sup>35</sup>

This resulted in a poor defense on the company's part. Additionally, the platoon designated as the battalion reserve was not prepared to influence the action when the time came. The platoon leader did not even attend the battalion's order briefing. Thus, the platoon leader did not issue his own order to the platoon. When the platoon was notified to board helicopters in order to block the enemy's advance through the sector, the platoon leader had to issue an order on the pick-up zone. The extra time the platoon leader took to issue his order allowed the enemy to target the helicopter pick-up zone resulting in the destruction of the helicopters and the platoon.<sup>36</sup>

Company C suffered fifty-seven casualties from a starting strength of one hundred and ten. The company inflicted little to no damage on the enemy.

The actions of the subordinate companies illustrate a demonstrated lack of understanding for the overall intended outcome of the operation. Even though the battalion commander failed to clearly state a purpose for the battalion conducting the operation, enough information was given to the subordinate leaders for them to perform better than they did. The subordinate leaders had opportunities to show initiative, but they failed to do so.

The lack of understanding in the orders process can be traced directly back to the battalion commander. However, the subordinate commanders failed to seek clarification on the

battalion's mission and the commander's intent. This directly resulted in a disorganized defense and a high rate of casualties for the friendly forces.

Taking into account the fact that subordinates could have taken some initiative at the company level but failed to do so, this order is classified as a Restrictive Type Order. Figure #1 charts this point.

#### Rotation #1 NTC.

Participating forces consisted of a separate infantry brigade with one mechanized infantry battalion, a light infantry battalion, and one armor battalion. The heavy/light units in this rotation were not task organized below the battalion level.

Unlike the JRTC, the rotations at the NTC are not conducted by phases, but instead are executed by missions assigned the units. Additionally, the format for the AAR is much different than at the JRTC. The OCs do not provide many comments at the NTC. The AAR is instead in narrative format.

The forces during this rotation conducted six missions over a ten day period. The missions were conducted in the following order: deliberate attack; defend in sector; movement to contact; meeting engagement; hasty attack; and a deliberate attack. All operations were conducted in a mid-to-high intensity battlefield environment against a Soviet style mechanized OPFOR.

The armor battalion assigned to the brigade is examined during this rotation at the NTC. The two missions chosen for investigation are a deliberate attack and a meeting engagement. The armor battalion cross-attached forces throughout the rotation, but typically was organized as a balanced task force with two infantry and two armor companies. Operations Order #1.

The task force planned and conducted a deliberate attack as part of a brigade attack. The brigade plan called for the task force to pass through a penetration of the enemy's main defensive belt achieved by an infantry task force in a dismounted night attack. Once through the belt, the task force was to attack on Axis Nevada to seize OBJ IMP and force the commitment of the regimental reserve of ten tanks. Key issues were land navigating, intelligence, lateral coordination, staff integration, mass/mobility, and command and control.

The Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) did not drive the planning process, and a Decision Support Template (DST) was not developed to support the plan. The reconnaissance effort of the task force was not coordinated with the infantry task force. Intelligence, as well as the other operating systems, was not fully integrated in the planning process. The process was abbreviated from a rudimentary mission analysis to a scheme of maneuver without Course Of Action (COA) development.



The task force crossed the LD on time along Route White, however, land navigation errors hindered the task force's ability to mass. One team attacked Red Lake Pass while the designated overwatched company set up out of range. The team designated to link through Lane Black failed to identify the contact point.

The infantry task force did not seize its objective, but cleared the obstacles along Lane Black. The infantry task force also failed to identify the breaches. The attack stalled for almost two hours at the north end of the lane. The task force then attacked piecemeal and was attrited to direct fire, artillery, and Close Air Support (CAS).<sup>37</sup>

#### Operations Order #1 - Discussion.

The task force commander and staff restated their mission in the following manner:

**The Task Force attacks and conducts a forward passage of lines through Task Force Infantry, along Passage Lane Black, then continues the attack along Axis Nevada to seize OBJ IMP; on order, conducts a hasty defense on OBJ IMP in order to destroy counterattacking enemy forces. Be prepared to continue the attack southwest along Axis Purple to seize OBJ JOKER.<sup>38</sup>**

The task force commander gave his intent as stated below:

**The task force commander wants to cause the enemy to commit its tank company reserve. This will support the division's main attack to our south. We will pass through Task Force Infantry or fight to seize the passage lane. Movement along Axis Nevada must be rapid to minimize exposure to enemy artillery fire and beat his tank reserve to OBJ IMP.<sup>39</sup>**

The task force commander clearly states in his intent that the purpose of the operation is to cause the enemy to commit his tank reserves, thus supporting the division's main attack to the south. The commander states this will be done by the task force either passing through the infantry task force or fighting to seize the passage lane. Unfortunately, the commander does not give the desired end state in his intent statement. He does not state how he wants the task force to look when the operation is completed.

The mission states that the task force is to seize OBJ IMP; this cannot be considered a desired end state. The commander, in his intent, fails to paint a picture as to what he wants the task force to be able to accomplish when the objective is seized.

Figure #1 charts that the commander stated a purpose for the operation and related how to accomplish the mission. It also indicates that the commander failed to provide the task force the desired end state upon completion of the operation.

#### **Subordinate Actions.**

The subordinate companies formulated their plans based on the task force commander's guidance and intent. The orders and action of the four companies are examined in the following paragraphs.

Company A's (Infantry) mission was "to seize OBJ IMP 1 and, on order, continue the attack southwest."<sup>40</sup> The

company commander issued his order to the key leaders in the company and then conducted a rehearsal. This provided enough time for the one third to two thirds rule to be put into effect.

A survey of all platoon leaders by the OCs, determined that platoon leaders understood about half of the scheme of maneuver. The company departed its assembly area in an orderly manner. After initiating movement on Axis White, the company became disoriented and moved too far to the east following Team B (Mech). Upon discovering that the company was off the prescribed route, the company/team commander attempted to get back on the correct route, but became intermingled with Team Cobra. The lead platoon was split up, and the company/team commander temporarily lost command and control of the company. Shortly after that, the company encountered enemy obstacles (mines and wire), attempted to breach, and was destroyed by enemy direct fire, artillery, and enemy aircraft. Company A did not accomplish its mission but it did assist the follow-on task force in its attempt to breach the initial obstacle belt.<sup>41</sup>

Team B's (Armor) mission was to "conduct a deliberate attack to establish overwatch; conduct a forward passage of lines through task force (Infantry) along PL BLACK; and be prepared for a counterattack from the south."<sup>42</sup>

The team commander allowed sufficient time to his subordinate leaders in the formulation of the company order.

The task force commander's intent as to the scheme of maneuver was fully understood at team level. The commander did fail to address all the factors of METT-T in the formulation of his order. Initially, no informal fire support planning was conducted by the commander and Fire Support Team (FIST).

The team crossed the LD on order and moved along Route White. The combat formation was considered adequate based on doctrine and the enemy situation. Dispersion and gun-tube orientation was not sustained. The lead platoon was unable to detect the enemy and pass accurate and timely spot reports. The team attempted to breach a wire and mine obstacle and was destroyed in an enemy kill sack.<sup>43</sup>

Team C's (Armor) mission was to "conduct a forward passage of lines through Task Force Infantry, along PL BLACK and continue the attack along Axis Nevada to a support-by-fire position; on order, conduct a hasty defense; on order, continue the attack southwest along Axis Purple to OBJ JOKER."<sup>44</sup>

The company departed the Assembly Area (AA) behind Team Gator and Team Hawk. The team followed the two teams off Lane White and got lost. After approximately thirty minutes, the company turned around and then traveled south behind Team Kat. During the second "red" air pass, the commander thought artillery was coming in and had his team go to Mission-Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) Level 4. Command and control was weak throughout the mission. The company had little or no impact on the task force mission.

Team D's (Infantry) mission was to "seize PP AT, and on order, Checkpoint 71, vicinity of the Whale; be prepared to attack OBJ IMP 2 in the vicinity of Furlong Ridge."<sup>45</sup> The team moved from an assembly area, and followed Team Cat along Route White. The team commander became disoriented but continued to move along the route. The team encountered a minefield and was engaged by the enemy. The team was attrited while the engineers made an uncoordinated and unsupported minefield breach. The team passed through the breach, was again engaged by the enemy, and attrited until only five M113s were left alive. After assisting the follow-on task force, the team withdrew through the breach where it linked up with the task force executive officer and provided security for the TOC.<sup>46</sup>

The task force's attack stalled almost before it got started. The main reason for this was the failure of the lead task force to conduct a successful breach. Land navigation was another key problem in the execution of the mission. The task force commander directed in his intent that the companies move rapidly along the route in order to avoid enemy fires. This rapid movement combined with poor navigation further contributed to the attack coming undone. The brigade commander decided to pass another task force through the breach after the attack became stalled. However, several of the OCs state that the company/team commanders understood what

was expected of them. They just never got the chance to execute.

Close inspection of the actions at the company level indicates that many of the subordinate leaders attempted to reach the breach site. Two of the companies even attempted to breach minefields in order to accomplish the mission. Individual platoons from two companies actually reached the breach site but were destroyed. The orders issued by the subordinate leaders clearly show that they understood the task force mission.

Based on the OC's comments and the actions of the companies up to the time the attack stalled, this order is classified a Restrictive Type Order. Figure #2 charts this information. Although some initiative was demonstrated at the lower levels, much more was called for in order to make this operation successful.

#### Operations Order #2.

The infantry brigade (higher headquarters) conducted an attack from east to west in the central corridor. The task force conducted a movement to contact to pass through Brown Pass, occupied a Battle Position (BP), and on order, continued the movement to contact to the west. The task force planned to move with Team A (Infantry) as the advance guard, Team B (Armor) in the south, Team C (Armor) in the north, and Team D(Armor) in the rear. The mission summary comments

concerning Team D are not available because this was a temporary task organization for this particular mission.

The task force had difficulty leaving the AA, became intermingled crossing the LD, and never achieved the planned formation. The advance guard did not achieve the planned separation and could not develop the situation. The task force received a Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) to move south, occupy a Battle Position (BP), and ambush the enemy's main body as it exited Debnam Pass. The task force's response was slow, and the enemy eventually penetrated the choke point. Although the task force was heavily attrited during the engagement, they were able to inflict severe damage on the enemy regiment.

During this operation, the commander's guidance and staff integration improved, however, the preparation was not fully reflected in the order. The process consumed sixty-seven percent of the time and hindered subordinate preparation.

As the battle unfolded, an enemy combat reconnaissance patrol, forward security element, and advance guard were identified. Unfortunately, the intelligence officer did not interpret this information correctly. As a result, a majority of the enemy's main body was able to move through the pass.<sup>47</sup> Staff integration showed marked improvement despite the abbreviated planning process used due to limited time available. The commander issued detailed planning guidance to

guide the staff's effort by operating system. Plans and graphics developed still lacked detail with respect to departing the Assembly Area, actions on the objective, forward passage, and consolidation. The good effort put forth by the staff in preparation and planning unfortunately was not reflected in the degree of details presented in the order briefing. The commander, operations officer, and engineer, however, did make good use of detailed terrain sketches and diagrams during explanation of key portions of the operation.<sup>48</sup>

#### Operations Order #2 - Discussion.

The task force used the abbreviated orders process due to the short amount of time to accomplish the assigned mission. Listed below is the restated mission from the task force order:

The Task Force conducts a movement to contact to destroy enemy forces in zone along Axis Virginia to PL GOLD; conducts forward passage of lines through Task Force Infantry along PLs CHEVY or FORD; be prepared to assist Task Force Infantry in seizing OBJ BRAVO in order to seize BP BB; be prepared to attack along Axis Alabama to seize OBJ DELTA and Axis Florida to seize OBJ ECHO.<sup>49</sup>

The task force commander's intent was as follows:

The task force commander wants to conduct a passage of line through Task Force Infantry to seize OBJ BRAVO; on order, we will conduct a movement to contact to destroy enemy forces in zone. The task force will orient on OBJs DELTA and ECHO, but will be prepared for a meeting engagement.<sup>50</sup>



The commander's stated purpose in the mission statement is to destroy enemy forces in zone. This purpose is again restated in the commander's intent. Unfortunately, the commander does not provide a reason why the task force is destroying the enemy forces. The intent statement does not contain a stated purpose that would facilitate initiative in leaders. The commander does relate how he intends to accomplish the assigned mission. He plans to conduct a movement to contact after passing through an infantry task force. The commander stated that he intends to orient on OBJs DELTA and ECHO. The desired end state the commander wants to achieve is to be prepared for a meeting engagement.

The commander's intent statement for this operation contains two elements of emerging/current doctrine, the desired end state and how to achieve the desired end state. A purpose for the operation is not provided by the commander. A summary of this information is contained in the chart at Figure #1.

#### **Subordinate Actions.**

The mission statement for Team A (Infantry) was "to conduct a movement to contact as the task force advanced guard secures passage of the task force main body through Lane Chevy and secure an objective in the vicinity of the Goat Trail."<sup>51</sup> The team commander received his orders the night prior to the mission. He issued his operations order the next morning. The commander gave a detailed order, however, graphics were

not disseminated down to platoon leaders, squad leaders, and tank commanders. The plan was to move in a wedge formation with the tank platoon leading followed by the VULCAN platoon, with 3rd Platoon on the right, and 2nd Platoon on the left. Actions on contact and on the objective were discussed in detail. The commander briefed the order only to squad leaders and above in the interest of time. The commander took the platoon leaders forward in his vehicle to see the battlefield, but did not conduct a reconnaissance, or time a route to the LD. Because the amount of time to plan and prepare for this mission was limited, rehearsals were not attempted.

The unit experienced command and control problems. Departing the AA, the tank platoon moved out about three hundred meters forward of the team, and the tanks from Team B cut across the formation causing the two units to become intermingled. The team never achieved its planned movement formation, nor its advanced guard posture. Prior to crossing Barstow Road, a third team (Company C, Armor) moved through Team A's formation from the rear and got in front of the company. The company commander never regained control of the unit; it moved into an enemy hasty ambush in the vicinity of Brown Pass. Team A was completely destroyed by enemy direct fire.

Team B's (Armor) mission was to "attack along Axis Minnesota to destroy an enemy platoon in the vicinity of OBJ RED; on order, occupy Support By Fire Position KC and continue

the attack to seize OBJ KAT 2 to prevent enemy counterattack."<sup>52</sup>

Upon receipt of an order from the task force commander, the team commander started an initial planning process. Troop leading procedures were not used during the planning phase. The team executive officer moved the company to a hasty Battle Position (BP) and oversaw the resupply operations and pre-combat preparation. The company order successfully mirrored the task force commander's intent. The route selected and combat formations used maximized the shock effect, fire power, and mobility of the main battle tank. In the planning process, enemy locations were tentatively identified, and based upon template methods of the IPB process, other locations were theoretically identified. These locations were doctrinally understood. The unit commander was able to identify an enemy fire sack within the area of operation.

The unit conducted "stand-to" in a timely manner. The team commander provided an intelligence briefing to the subordinate platoon leaders prior to LD time. An attack position was used to gain command and control of the unit prior to movement to the LD. Limited visibility markings were used to assist in maintaining control. The unit crossed the LD at the specified time, location, and in the specified formation. Overall movement techniques were appropriate to the combat situation. The unit moved in a team wedge

formation. Reaction to artillery was appropriate with crews closing hatches and moving through. Upon occupation of the overwatch position, terrain prevented the unit from attaining an overwatch mission. The company commander recognized the problem and attempted to move his unit forward in order to accomplish his assigned mission. This action was taken without having communicated with the task force commander. The Team B commander took these actions based on the intent of the task force commander. Unfortunately, as the Team B commander maneuvered his unit to a better Support by Fire Position (SBP); he and his unit was engaged and destroyed by the enemy.

The mission assigned to Team C (Armor) was "to conduct a movement to contact to destroy enemy forces in zone to PL GOLD; on order, conduct a passage of lines along Lane Chevy or Lane Ford through Task Force Infantry."<sup>53</sup>

The team could not conduct rehearsals during the preparation period because of time constraints. Maintenance also degraded the combat power of the team as evidenced by two tanks becoming non-mission capable thirty minutes prior to LD and one during the battle.

During the movement to the LD, the team pushed through Team Gator and jumped ahead of the task force. The team commander lost all communications with the task force. Even so, the commander attempted to relay critical information to the task force commander. The team commander also experienced

internal communications problems which hindered his command and control of the team. Nevertheless, the team was instrumental in the destruction of a large portion of the enemy's lead elements. The commander continued with his assigned mission even though he was not able to communicate with his next higher commander.<sup>54</sup>

This was the most successful of all the missions conducted by this task force during the rotation. The largest number of enemy forces were destroyed and the task force came very close to accomplishing all of its assigned objectives. Additionally, the actions of the subordinate commanders come very close to what is expected in a mission order environment. The task force as a whole still experienced many problems, however, such as movement formations and command and control which lead to the piecemeal commitment of combat power.

Even with the problems of the task force, two of the subordinate team commanders were able to demonstrate some independent actions. The commanders for Teams B and C were able to continue the mission without orders or communications from the task force commander. Additionally, the Team B commander moved his unit forward of his assigned position in order to provide better supporting fires for the task force.

Due to independent actions of the team commanders, this order is classified as a favorable type order. Figure #2 charts this decision.

### Rotation #2 NTC.

This rotation concentrates on a squadron of a armored cavalry regiment. The squadron consists of three troops assigned to the unit (A,B,and C), and one tank company (D) attached for this rotation.

The squadron conducted five major missions during the rotation which included: a live-fire defense in sector, night attack, defense in sector against an OPFOR, zone reconnaissance, and a hasty attack. Additionally, the squadron was assigned several missions on short notice by way of FRAGOs. The rotation was nine days long and consisted of live fire and force-on-force missions.

The two missions examined during this rotation are the night attack and the zone reconnaissance. The paragraphs below summarize these missions.

### Operations Order #1.

The mission assigned to the squadron for this operation was a night attack as part of a regimental flank security operation. The squadron mission was to "attack and defeat enemy forces, clear the zone, and guard corp's flank."<sup>55</sup> Key issues commented on by the OCs were reconnaissance, use of scouts, indirect fire execution, speed/momentum, land navigation, command and control, and maintenance.

A concerted integration effort was made during the planning process. The executive officer was active in the

"chief of staff" role during the planning process. A continued weakness in the planning process is an integrated time analysis used to develop a time management system. The squadron had difficulty departing its attack position, did not achieve the planned formation, and moved rapidly on the axis. The lead troop successfully breached the enemy obstacle belt. The remaining elements intermingled north of Furlong Ridge, lost dispersion, and were heavily attrited by enemy artillery. Remnants of the squadron were destroyed south of the ridge after penetrating the defensive position.<sup>56</sup>

This attack was conducted during hours of darkness. Problems with navigation and the lack of a detailed plan to depart the assembly area severely hampered the planned execution of the mission. However, the squadron did accomplish the assigned mission and was able to inflict heavy damage on the enemy.

#### Operation Order #1 - Discussion.

The mission statement for the squadron's attack was stated as follows:

**The squadron conducts a movement to contact to destroy the enemy in zone in order to seize OBJ COWBOY; on order, guard BP7; on order, attack OBJ DOUG.<sup>57</sup>**

The commander's intent was stated as follows:

**Our attack is critical to the success of the brigade to our flanks. I want to destroy all enemy in our zone depriving him the ability to shift forces from our sector. Seizure of the west side of the Leach Lake Passes is key to our security and ability to interdict forces in the Leach Lake Valley. I want to**

quickly punch into the Nelson Lake Valley on two axes to cause the enemy to fight in multiple directions. We will be successful if we cause the enemy to commit his counterattack forces in our sector.<sup>58</sup>

The above intent statement contains all three traits specified in current/emerging doctrine. The purpose of the operation was to prevent the enemy from shifting forces into other sectors. The commander also provides general guidance as to how he wants the operations to be conducted. He directs that certain key terrain be controlled/seized and that he wants to use multiple axes during the attack. Furthermore, he states that the desired end state is the enemy committing his counterattack forces into the squadron sector. The chart at Figure #1 reflects that the commander's intent statement contains all three required traits.

#### Subordinate Actions.

Troop A was tasked to conduct a movement to contact as the lead element on the northern axis. Their restated mission was to "destroy all enemy in sector and establish BP7 to destroy enemy counterattack; on order, attack along Axis Hammer to OBJ DOUG."<sup>59</sup> The task organization consisted of Troop A (+); two scouts sections, one tank section, and one engineer section.

The OCs state that the troop commander gave an excellent warning order after conducting mission analysis. The OCs also state that "this was in anticipation of a follow-on mission not directives from higher."<sup>60</sup>



Additionally, fire planning was excellent. The Fire Support Team (FIST) "was very proactive and passed out a fire support matrix to scouts, but not the tankers."<sup>61</sup>

After moving to and occupying the initial battle position, the commander ordered the scouts to conduct a reconnaissance of the obstacle. The scouts did an excellent job of using reverse slope and dismounted observation posts to look forward toward the obstacle.

The commander saw the enemy mount a counterattack and attempted to call for indirect fire in order to cover his scouts. The Troop A commander then ordered his forces forward after he was unable to get indirect fire support because the batteries and mortars were not ready to shoot. After stopping the enemy counterattack and losing some engineer assets to the counterattack, the 3rd Platoon found a bypass around the north of the sector, and the troop moved toward the north wall as was originally planned. The OCs state that the movement by scouts along the north wall was excellent as they used terrain and moved aggressively. As the troop crossed PL SWORD, the tanks caught up and started to pass the scouts as an enemy platoon on the far side of a known obstacle began to engage them. The tanks conducted an action drill and moved directly at the enemy platoon. The tank platoon's attack stalled as it was slowed in the obstacle. The enemy was forced to withdraw after the Troop A commander called an air strike on the enemy position. The commander then ordered the

troop forward through the breach. The lead vehicle ran into an obstacle that was covered by Hand Held Anti-Tank Rocket (RPG) gunners and was killed. The remaining vehicles moved into a battle position with Company D in an attempt to destroy an enemy counterattack. All remaining elements in the troop were "killed" by indirect fire and chemical agents.<sup>62</sup>

The OCs also comment that Troop A did a very good job of reconnaissance and reacting to the enemy counterattacks. Additionally, the OCs applaud the troop commander's ability to make decisions on his own without having to confer with the squadron commander. It is clear that the Troop A commander understood the intended outcome of the operation.

The restated mission for Troop B was to "conduct a movement to contact to destroy enemy forces in sector; on order, attack OBJ DOUG."<sup>63</sup> The task organization for Troop B consisted of Troop B and three attached engineer platoons.

The troop commander issued a five-paragraph operations order to all vehicle commanders and above. The OCs state that an accurate company level IPB was conducted. The plan included adequate control measures for direct fire and movement.<sup>64</sup>

After crossing the LD, the troop became intermingled with two other troops. The troop also failed to provide security at obstacles and exposed itself and the breach force to enemy flanking fires. The commander used the 4.2" mortar section of the troop to effectively suppress the enemy

positions. The troop was engaged by the enemy as it moved through the breach of the obstacle. In order to get his troop moving again, the troop commander led through the final obstacle. Unfortunately, he was over four kilometers in front of the troop and was unsupported by any direct fire weapons systems. The troop commander was eventually killed and the troop attrited as it attempted to move through the obstacle.<sup>65</sup>

Although the troop was destroyed as it moved through the obstacle, the troop commander displayed some initiative. When he realized that the attack was stalled, he moved to the front of the column in order to get the unit moving again.

The Troop C commander stated his mission as "Troop C conducts movement to contact from PL FIST to PL TOMAHAWK; on order, attack OBJ DOUG to destroy the enemy in zone."<sup>66</sup> The task organization for the troop consisted of only organic assets.

The OCs state that the commander conducted excellent planning in preparation for this operation. One comment was that "the commander used Target Reference Points (TRP) to orient the fires of his troop on suspected enemy locations."<sup>67</sup> This technique allowed the commander to shift concentrated fires rapidly onto the enemy. The Troop C commander also planned in detail actions on the objective.<sup>68</sup>

After the troop moved to the LD, it encountered an obstacle at which time the commander conducted a

reconnaissance by fire to determine enemy positions. The mortars provided excellent fire support for the move to the final objective. When the troop made contact with the enemy, it conducted action on contact drills according to its rehearsals. This worked very well for Troop C. The troop accomplished its mission as assigned by higher headquarters. A key comment by the OCs was that "the platoon leaders coordinated among themselves once contact was made."<sup>69</sup> This allowed the platoon leaders to show initiative in adjusting their formations and fires when the situation called for a change.

The mission statement for Company D was stated as "conduct a movement to contact to destroy the enemy in zone to seize OBJ COWBOY; on order, guard BP7; on order, attack to seize OBJ DOUG."<sup>70</sup> The task organization for Company D consisted of organic assets.

The plan called for Company D to follow behind Troop A and the howitzer battery, and to be available where needed. The OCs state that the company commander provided his order to the platoon leaders with only one and a half hours before LD time. The commander did a good job of analyzing the battlefield. The OCs also mention that "information flow was good" during the planning process.<sup>71</sup> However, there was very little direct fire planning.<sup>72</sup>

The company used very good movement techniques during the move to the LD. When necessary, the company moved

forward quickly to support Troop A. When assisting Troop A to defend a battle position, a very high rate of fire destroyed enemy vehicles engaged. The company deliberately maintained a gap of two thousand to four thousand meters between itself and Troop A while advancing down Drink Water Valley. When moving forward to assist in the defense of the battle position, confusion with guides cost approximately twenty minutes in getting the unit forward. The hasty positions selected by Company D had poor fields of fire. In repelling the enemy counterattack, a high volume of fire was maintained, but reaction to air attack was poor and to artillery was fair.<sup>73</sup>

Company D assisted Troop A on several occasions. The company commander showed good initiative by assisting the Troop A elements in defending the battle position against the enemy counterattack. Company D's actions greatly affected the favorable outcome of the squadron's operation.

The OC's comments reflect several instances of initiative on the part of the team/company commanders. This freedom of action was continued down to the platoon level on several occasions. Based on the actions of subordinate leaders and units, it is clear that the unit as a whole understood the squadron commander's intent for this operation.

Taking into account the high degree of initiative demonstrated by the leaders and subordinate units during this operation, this order is classified a mission type order. The

OCs do not provide an instance where a subordinate could have taken the initiative but failed to do so. Figure #2 charts this decision.

Operations Order #2.

The mission assigned to the squadron for this operation was a reconnaissance in zone. The squadron consisted of three troops and one tank company. Key issues affecting the performance of the unit during this operation were land navigation, security, lateral coordination, command and control, cross talk, and initiative. Darkness and land navigation problems made it difficult for the squadron to occupy its zones.

The squadron issued the operations order late, which hindered subordinate preparation time (fifty-seven percent of time). The order included major contingencies, but the passage of another battalion was not addressed. The initial passage was coordinated late, but most information was passed to subordinates at the squadron rehearsal. The start time for the operation was changed just prior to the operation. The squadron sent a message to all subordinate units, however, not all units acknowledged the message. When the time came to conduct the passage, two troops/companies and the combat support (CS)/combat service support (CSS) assets expected the original LD and were not postured for offensive operations.<sup>74</sup>

The unit experienced a break in contact during the initial move to the LD. This caused the entire squadron to

slow down; thereby losing the opportunity for a coordinated attack. Additionally, command and control was hindered by loss of the squadron commander and operations officer, nevertheless, team leaders attempted to consolidate remnants. Upon the completion of consolidation, the squadron assumed a hasty defense. The squadron experienced many problems during this operation, thus, all assigned tasks were not accomplished.

Operations Order #2 - Discussion.

The squadron used the standard five-paragraph operations order. The OCs state that the operations order was not detailed enough and did not contain all pertinent information.

The squadron's restated mission statement was as follows:

The squadron establishes a screen along PL SUPPER and passes through another squadron. On order, the squadron follows and passes through the first squadron on Axis Perryville or Axis Shiloh to seize OBJs SHERMAN, STARRY, REYNOLDS, STUART, and GRANT to destroy the enemy main defensive belt.<sup>75</sup>

The squadron commander's intent was as follows:

I want to facilitate a forward passage with our sister squadron, collapse the screen line, mass, and then move behind them. We must protect our flanks as we move and bring the squadron into formation in order to pass through the lead squadron. After we attack into Brown Pass, we must regain command and control, mass, and move quickly inside of the valley. I want to envelop Crash Hill from the north.<sup>76</sup>

The squadron commander does not state a purpose for the operation in his intent or restated mission statement. He

does not provide the reason for seizing the objectives referred to in the mission statement. However, the commander does state how he wants the squadron to accomplish the mission. The fact that the commander states that he wants the squadron to pass another squadron to the front, then follow the first squadron, attack into Brown Pass, and envelop Crash Hill from the north provides a framework for the force as a whole to plan from. Unfortunately, the squadron commander does not provide a desired end state for the squadron to achieve.

Only one of the three prescribed elements for commander's intent doctrine is contained in his intent statement. The commander does not provide a purpose for the operations or a desired end state. How the force as a whole is to accomplish the stated mission is the only element of intent doctrine contained in this intent statement. Figure #1 charts this information.

#### **Subordinate Actions.**

The mission assigned to Troop A was "on order, follow Troop C to support the squadron in a hasty attack along Axis Perryville or Axis Shiloh to seize OBJs SHERMAN, STARRY, REYNOLDS, STUART, and GRANT; on order, conduct a hasty attack along Axis North to OBJ CROOK."<sup>77</sup>

The OCs state that the commander briefed the operations order and sufficiently covered the plan in detail. The commander addressed actions on contact and at obstacles in



good detail. However, the commander understood that the unit was to cross the LD at 0730; the 0600 hours change was not received.<sup>78</sup>

The commander conducted a good rehearsal with platoon leaders and platoon sergeants. The troop departed the assembly area with very little trouble. The commander was still under the belief that the mission time was at 0730 hours, versus 0600 hours. The OCs state that the command and control at the platoon level was excellent. However, the control at the troop level was minimal. Crossing the LD late caused Troop A to have very little effect on squadron operations.<sup>79</sup>

Troop B's mission was to "screen along PL SKIPPER and assist in the forward passage of lines of another squadron from the Armored Calvary Regiment (ACR); on order, follow the lead squadron in zone; on order, pass through the lead squadron along Axis Perryville or Axis Shiloh in squadron formation to seize OBJs SHERMAN, STARRY, GRANT, STUART, and REYNOLDS in order to destroy the enemy's main defensive belt MRR."<sup>80</sup> The troop consisted of two armor and two mechanized platoons.

The troop moved to the screen line without a problem. The troop executive officer was tasked to control the forward passage of lines of the other squadron. The OCs state that the executive officer did an outstanding job during this period. The troop's efforts during the passage of lines

allowed the other squadron to pass through the troop smoothly.

After the forward passage of lines with the other squadron, Troop B established a screen line. The troop began to move the next morning after first light to its attack position. After it began to move forward, the troop began to be attrited by enemy air and artillery. Its reaction to enemy artillery was good. Each time artillery landed, the troop commander issued orders for the troop to move in order to exit the danger areas quickly.

The squadron commander and operations officer were killed by enemy reconnaissance vehicles early in the establishment of the screen line. However, the troop did receive an order to move forward in zone in order to secure/clear Debnam, Prey, and Holly Passes and to push friendly observation posts up next to Crash Hill, the enemy's main defensive belt. The troop commander and platoon leaders demonstrated good initiative by moving into the enemy's main defensive belt and destroying almost half of the enemy reconnaissance. The OCs state that "because of the troop's quick movement forward and the meticulous clearing of passes by 1st and 2nd Platoons, the troop was able to destroy half of the regiment's reconnaissance battalion and place the screen line in a position where they could observe the enemy main defensive belt."<sup>81</sup> Elements from 1st Platoon were pushed forward to establish both mounted and dismounted observation posts. These observation posts identified and reported the

location of twelve enemy vehicles and the location of a major obstacle. The troop commander attempted to place indirect fire on the enemy but because the squadron did not have priority of fires the mission was delayed.

As planned, Troop B led the squadron to the vicinity of the final objective, then occupied a support-by-fire position. While Troop B attempted to fix the southern motorized rifle battalion with direct fire, the squadron attacked just north of the objective achieving a penetration but becoming combat ineffective. As Troop B continued to fix the southern enemy battalion, they became combat ineffective due to massed enemy indirect fire.

Troop C led the squadron on an axis behind the lead squadron of the ACR. The troop lost contact with the lead squadron's combat elements, then moved forward to regain contact. Command and control was maintained despite heavy attrition from artillery, air attack, and fratricide. The troop moved past the lead squadron and occupied a hasty defensive position in the vicinity of OBJ TERRY.<sup>82</sup>

The OCs comments indicate that the operations order for Troop C was issued in detail. The intent statement reflected lessons previously learned, and an execution matrix was used. However, the graphics used were not complete.<sup>83</sup>

Movement and formations were good to the initial screen position. The troop soon lost contact with the lead squadron. This break in contact resulted in the destruction

of three friendly vehicles. The troop did manage to maintain momentum and attempted to keep positive control of all assets. Overwatching fires were used along with a good use of terrain. The troop made contact with another troop and gained valuable information. Efforts were also made to get fire support in order to suppress enemy observers. The mortars did not respond to the calls for fire. During the confusion, the troop lost control of the engineers. This caused the destruction of the remainder of the troop in an enemy minefield.<sup>84</sup>

The mission given to Company D was to conduct a movement to contact/hasty attack. This called for Company D to conduct a "forward passage of lines through the lead squadron of the regiment along Axis Start, then move along Axis Almost to seize OBJ SHERMAN; on order, move along Axis Finish to seize OBJ ENDEX."<sup>85</sup>

The commander issued a brief operations order which covered essential information. Platoon leaders and sergeants also participated in a company level rehearsal. The company moved in the rear of the squadron diamond formation. Shortly after crossing the LD, the company was attrited heavily by enemy air and artillery. The company made initial direct fire contact when three enemy armored vehicles closed on the rear of the unit after being bypassed. The company quickly identified the threat. Company D destroyed the enemy vehicles with the loss of three tanks. The company received a FRAGO to

change mission when the squadron consolidated and reorganized.

The squadron had difficulty from the beginning of the operation. The commander changed the start time for the operation. Only two of the four subordinate units received the change. This caused a delay in crossing the LD for the squadron.

Once the squadron crossed the LD, individual companies attempted to complete the mission, but the loss of the squadron commander and the operations officer early in the operation had an adverse affect on command and control. As a result, the companies/troops were destroyed piecemeal by the enemy.

The OCs state that some initiative was demonstrated at the lower levels of command particularly within some platoons. Unfortunately, the companies/troops took no decisive actions once the lead squadron stalled. Therefore, this order is classified a restrictive type order. Figure #2 charts this information.

# **I N T E N T   T R A I T S**

TRAIT	JRTC				NTC			
	R1		R2		R1		R2	
	01	02	01	02	01	02	01	02
#1 (PURPOSE)					XX		XX	
#2 (ENDSTATE)	XX	XX		XX		XX	XX	
#3 (HOW)	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX

**R = Rotation**  
**O = Operations Order**

**FIGURE #1**

# MISSION ORDER SCALE

CATEGORY	JRTC				NTC			
	R1		R2		R1		R2	
	01	02	01	02	01	02	01	02
A (MISSION)							XX	
B (FAVORABLE)						XX		
C (RESTRICTIVE)	XX	XX		XX	XX			XX
D (CONTROLLING)			XX					

R = Rotation  
O = Operations Order

FIGURE #2

**C O M P A R I S O N   O F :  
I N T E N T   T R A I T S   /   M I S S I O N   O R D E R S**

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER OF ORDERS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRAITS PER ORDER
A (MISSION)	1	3
B (FAVORABLE)	1	2
C (RESTRICTIVE)	5	2
D (CONTROLLING)	1	1

**FIGURE #3**



### INTERPRETATION OF DATA.

The chart at Figure #1 reflects that many of the orders issued during the rotations did not contain a stated purpose for the operation. However, the orders which did provide a purpose to subordinates rated relatively well on the mission type order scale at Figure #2. Two orders contained a stated purpose within the commander's intent statement; one achieved a restrictive rating and the other order achieved a mission type rating.

The data also indicates that when a commander provides a desired end state to subordinate leaders, the results are more favorable in terms of lower unit leaders demonstrating initiative. Five orders contained desired end states within the commander's intent statement; three were rated restrictive; one was rated favorable; and one was rated a mission type order.

Commanders addressed how they wanted their units to accomplish the assigned mission in all eight orders investigated. Two of these orders addressed only how the commanders wanted their units to act without addressing a desired end state or purpose. These orders were classified as restrictive and controlling. More importantly, when commanders combined the how of the operation with a desired end state, the results become slightly more favorable. Four orders address how the unit was to act and the desired end state within the commander's intent; three orders were

classified as restrictive and one achieved a favorable rating.

One commander addressed all three elements of the current/emerging doctrine in his intent statement. This order achieved very good results; it was rated as a mission type order.

The chart at Figure #3 illustrates the point that the higher the number of traits contained in a particular order, the better it fared on the mission order scale. Clearly, a direct relationship exists between the number of traits and the degree to which an order is considered a mission type order.

#### **ANALYSIS OF DATA.**

A properly stated purpose for a given operation allows subordinate leaders to focus on a decisive goal. Commanders must not only state a purpose for the force as a whole, but they must also ensure that the language and terms used are meaningful to subordinates. One technique to ensure that subordinate leaders are familiar with the language used by the commander in his intent statement is to use doctrinally accepted terms. This shortcoming is addressed Chapter 5.

The stated purpose in a intent statement should be more encompassing than the purpose in the mission statement. The purpose in the mission statement usually only addresses the why of the operation. For instance, the purpose in a mission statement might task the force to "seize a hill in order to allow another unit to conduct a forward passage of

lines."<sup>86</sup> The commander's intent might state the that the purpose of the operation is to "assist the passing unit to the front in order not to lose momentum."<sup>87</sup> A cursory review of these two statements might not reveal a significant difference. However, by understanding that the ultimate purpose of the operation is not to allow a loss of momentum, subordinate unit commanders can take certain actions to ensure success. Instead of just allowing the following unit to pass to the front, subordinate leaders might seize additional terrain, suppress enemy positions, establish guides, and find alternate routes for the passing unit. As demonstrated in the examined rotations, this becomes critical when events do not unfold as expected.

At lower levels, the purpose of the operation in the intent statement and the mission statement may be the same. This is appropriate given subordinates understand what is expected. Commanders must not feel obligated to make a statement of intent if it is not meaningful to the situation. This will only confuse the issue.

Too often, a purpose for the operation is not stated in either the mission or intent statements of an order. Statements such as "attack to the seize the hill"<sup>88</sup> are not sufficient for subordinate commanders to take the appropriate actions when not in communications with their higher headquarters. Understanding what is really important permits subordinates to take the correct actions. Often, the purpose

in a commander's intent statement refers to other friendly units. This establishes relationships between main and supporting efforts. If the idea is to protect the flank of other units and a terrain objective is assigned to a subordinate unit, very quickly the terrain becomes secondary when circumstances change. Understanding the flank of the next unit is the focal point which allows the subordinate leaders to change objectives or orient maneuver on the main effort. This would be difficult to convey to a junior leader if the purpose of the operation was nothing more than "attack to seize the hill."<sup>89</sup>

Several examples of commander's intent statements addressed in this thesis attempted to address all foreseeable contingencies. This did nothing more than confuse junior leaders. The commander must decide what is critical to the operation and then express it in terms understandable at least two levels down the chain of command. When commanders address too many items in the intent statement, the message becomes blurred and meaningless. The commander must have a clear picture of what is important himself before he can relate it to subordinates. This requires thought on the part of the commander.

The "how" in the commander's intent statement lays the foundation for the concept of operations in paragraph three of the operations order. Unfortunately, as seen in the examples provided, many commanders use the intent statement to give a

detailed scheme of maneuver. This makes the intent statement very long and blurs what is really important. The terms to describe "how" in the commander's intent statement must be general in nature. For instance, the form of maneuver or type of defense is more appropriate than a detailed scheme. The maneuver paragraph should address the particulars referred to in the intent statement. The commander may also want to expound as to why a certain technique is used. This is appropriate if a certain effect is desired on the battlefield. Understanding the thought process of a higher commander also affords subordinates initiative.

The statement of how in the commander's intent statement must direct subordinate leaders to a desired end state. The end state relates several messages to the force as a whole. This portion of the commander's intent can convey the amount of risk the commander desires to accept. A statement concerning the condition of the force or key equipment at the end of the operations tells subordinates what is an acceptable level of risk to accept. Secondly, the end state can address the specific disposition of friendly forces at the completion of the operation. This is a key point if further operations are expected.

A common mistake made by commanders is that they do not formulate their intent statements to a specific audience. Our doctrine states that the commander's intent must be understood at least two levels down. For instance, a

battalion commander should write his intent for company commanders and platoon leaders. A clear linkage must exist between levels of command. A battalion commander must consider the division and brigade commander's intent statements when addressing his subordinates. Only a small portion of the higher commander's intents may apply to lower level leaders. The commander must act as a filter and a conduit for subordinates. Platoon leaders and company commanders are not afforded the opportunity to read the division order. However, if commanders down the line write their intents properly, a clear path of effort should flow to the lowest levels.

**Summary.**

The data and analysis confirms the proposed hypothesis which is stated below:

**The current/emerging Army doctrine for the commander's intent statement facilitates the issuance of mission orders.**

There are no guarantees for success on the battlefield. However, the commander's intent statement is a powerful tool capable of generating independent action among junior leaders. The current/emerging doctrine for commander's intent statements facilitates the issuance of mission type orders when it is properly formulated and conveyed to subordinates.

#### ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup>After Action Report, Joint Readiness Training Center,  
(Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Lessons Learned).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>After Action Report, National Training Center, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Lessons Learned).

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.



51 Ibid.  
52 Ibid.  
53 Ibid.  
54 Ibid.  
55 Ibid.  
56 Ibid.  
57 Ibid.  
58 Ibid.  
59 Ibid.  
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61 Ibid.  
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68 Ibid.  
69 Ibid.  
70 Ibid.  
71 Ibid.  
72 Ibid.  
73 Ibid.  
74 Ibid.  
75 Ibid.  
76 Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>The author provides this example.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction.**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the research question. The first section of this chapter provides conclusions drawn from the literature research and the analysis of the data in Chapter Four. The second section makes recommendations as to the improvement and training of current/emerging doctrine for commanders' intent statements. Topics which require further research are presented in the third section. Finally, the relationship to previous research and summary comments is provided.

#### **Conclusions.**

The commander's intent statement is but one of several tools available to the commander to allow initiative and independence of action in subordinates. Nevertheless, the intent statement is the focal point of the mission type order. It is the foundation upon which the concept of operations is built. Furthermore, intent is the link between the mission statement and the concept of operations.

Current doctrine does not address commander's intent statements in adequate detail to be useful to commanders in

the field. However, the emerging doctrine contained in the draft version of Field Manual 101-5 is basically sound. Given the void of current doctrine, emerging doctrine is widely accepted as being approved. The U.S. Army CGSOC at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, teaches emerging intent doctrine to its students. The graduates from this institution carry these concepts to the field throughout the U.S. Army.

Some improvements are required to emerging doctrine in order to make it more useful to commanders in the field. Specific recommendations are addressed in the next section.

How the U.S. Army trains commanders and subordinates to implement the commander's intent doctrine is as important as the doctrine itself. Much of the U.S. Army's training literature does not even address the issue of intent. Teaching commanders to develop and communicate sound intent statements and training subordinates how to gain initiative from them is vital to the concept of mission type tactics.

#### Recommendations.

1. Change emerging doctrine contained in the draft version of Field Manual 101-5 so that it provides more specific guidance concerning the purpose in the commander's intent statement. The draft version of Field Manual 101-5 only requires the commander to provide an "operations purpose" within his intent.<sup>1</sup> Doctrine must be more specific as to how the purpose in the commander's intent statement differs from the why or purpose in the mission statement. Several examples

in Chapter Four demonstrate that commanders do not understand the difference. Therefore, on several occasions the purpose in the mission statement was simply restated in the commander's intent.

The commander who wrote the order in Chapter Four which contained all three traits of current/emerging doctrine made a clear distinction between the purpose stated in the mission statement and the purpose in his commander's intent. In his mission statement, the commander stated that the purpose of the operation was to seize an objective.<sup>2</sup> This statement explained why the force was conducting a movement to contact and were tasked to destroy forces in zone. The commander expounds on this purpose in his intent statement by relating why the operation is important to flank units. The commander states that the unit must destroy forces in zone so as to "deprive the enemy of the ability to shift forces from our sector."<sup>3</sup> This is the over-riding purpose for the operation. Subordinates can take independent action when they have this information. For instance, if a junior leader encounters a superior enemy force and he is not able to destroy the enemy, he may attempt to contain or block the enemy from moving into the flank of an adjacent unit. In this example, the subordinate leader understands that keeping the enemy from moving into the flank of an adjacent unit is the most important task. Doctrine is not specific enough in this area.

2. **Incorporate in the U.S. Army's educational system techniques to train subordinates how to gain initiative and freedom of action from a commander's intent statement.** Current U.S. Army doctrine states that subordinates must understand the commander's intent two levels up in order to gain initiative.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, doctrine is not specific as to how this is accomplished. Emphasis in this area is essential during the early years of leadership development; officer basic courses and non-commissioned officer primary courses are good starting points. Junior leaders must ask specific questions in order to understand how they fit into the overall situation of an operation.

It is not enough to say that a junior leader did not understand the commander's intent when an opportunity to show independent action is missed. Questions must be asked as to why subordinates fail to take the initiative during tactical operations.

3. **Make commanders responsible for the contents in their intent statements.** No commander in the four rotations at CTCs in Chapter Four were held accountable for the contents of their intent statements. The OCs referred to the fact that subordinates failed to understand the commander's intent, but no reference was made as to why. Often problems originated with the commander.

Frequently, the intent statement is thought to be sacrosanct. If the concept of mission order is to work,

responsibility must be placed where it belongs not only with subordinates, but also with commanders. The CTCs are the places to begin. When a commander issues a poor intent statement to subordinates, he should be corrected. This can be accomplished in a discrete manner, but it must be done.

**Proposed Topics Requiring Additional Research.**

1. Address the concept of risk-taking more clearly in the format for commander's intent in the draft version of Field Manual 101-5. Risk is an integral part of any military operation. Subordinates must understand what degree of risk or damage to the force is acceptable during the conduct of operations. This point is alluded to in the format for commander's intent. Field Manual 101-5 (Draft) states that commanders must address the operation's end state "describing the relationship between the friendly and enemy forces with respect to their capabilities and the terrain."<sup>5</sup> The aspect of capabilities of the force at the conclusion of the operation is directly related to the amount of risk allowed to subordinates during the operation. Examples in Chapter Four demonstrate when subordinates do not understand the acceptable amount of risk allowed; the consequences were disastrous for the force.

2. Modify doctrine to give commanders at lower levels the option to produce and issue an intent statement as part of an operation. Emerging doctrine obligates commanders at all levels to issue a Statement of Intent. This leads to

redundancy and confusion at lower levels of command. At the battalion and company levels of command, a well-written mission statement and concept of operations often suffices to provide focus to subordinates. Certainly commanders at all levels must understand and incorporate the intent of commanders two levels up the chain of command. However, in some instances, the purpose of the operation is nothing more than to achieve the stated mission.

When commanders feel obligated to make a Statement of Intent which is not needed required, the orders process becomes cluttered with meaningless verbiage. This tendency leads to masking what is really important.

**3. Revise Field Manual 101-5-1 in order to provide concise doctrinal terms to commanders.** The U.S. Army, as a whole, lacks a precise lexicon. In order to facilitate concise orders and communications, specific terms must be used to convey intended outcomes. The lack of precise terms in the U.S. Army's current doctrine forces commanders to explain what they mean in their intent statements and orders; this process makes for extremely wordy statements.

The operational terms found in Field Manual 101-5-1 are very general in meaning; often one term will reference other terms. Additionally, many terms in this manual have more than one meaning. For example, several of the orders contained in Chapter Four used the term "destroy" to identify a task which subordinates must accomplish. This term is not



defined in Field Manual 101-5-1. Another term often used at higher levels of command is the task to "defeat" an enemy force. Once again, this term is not found in Field Manual 101-5-1. The terms "destroy" and "defeat" are commonly used throughout the U.S. Army. The fact that a standard definition does not exist forces local commanders and institutions to create definitions for these tasks. This manual does attempt to define the commander's intent as the "Commander's vision of the battle - how he expects to fight and what he expects to accomplish."<sup>6</sup> This definition fails to mention the purpose of the operation, a key element in intent doctrine. Furthermore, the term "purpose" is not defined in this doctrinal manual.

The German concept of "Auftragstaktik" was based in part on a common education and language among the leaders in the U.S. Army. In an attempt to produce a doctrine which applies at all levels, the U.S. Army's doctrine writers have diluted the meaning of many doctrinal terms. Since "mission-orders require precise language,"<sup>7</sup> this subject is a topic for further research.

#### **Relationship to Previous Research.**

This study continues much of the work initiated by Major Robert Tezza in his Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) thesis "Teaching Mission Orders in Officer Advanced Course Instruction: Reality or Myth." One of his conclusions is that the U.S. Army needs to "refine its tactical language

to provide commanders necessary means to express their concept of operations to subordinates in a concise and clear manner."<sup>8</sup>

Another work which provided much insight for this thesis is Major Michael J. Harwood's Monograph "Auftragstatik: We Can't Get There From Here," which concludes that a true system of mission orders is unattainable. However, he states that "movement towards Auftragstaktik is the next best solution."<sup>9</sup>

#### Summary Comments.

The U.S. Army's doctrine for intent is basically sound. Research indicates that commanders which incorporate this doctrine into their intent statements generate a much greater level of initiative in subordinate leaders.

The key ingredients of a useful commander's intent statement are: an over-riding purpose for the operation; a clear statement of the desired end state; and a concise statement of how the force will achieve the desired end state.

This is a two-way process. Commanders have the obligation to issue useful intent statements to subordinates. Subordinates are duty-bound to understand what the commander wants to achieve on the battlefield and to take the appropriate actions.

## END NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup>FM 101-5, Draft, Staff Organization and Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1991), 1-5.

<sup>2</sup>After Action Report, National Training Center, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Lessons Learned). This example is contained in Chapter Four of this thesis at Rotation Two - Order One.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>FM 100-5, Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1986), 22.

<sup>5</sup>FM 101-5, Draft, Staff Operations and Organization, (1991), 1-5.

<sup>6</sup>FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1985), 1-17.

<sup>7</sup>Robert J. Tezza, "Teaching Mission Orders in Officer Advanced Course Instruction: Reality or Myth?", (Masters of Military Arts and Science, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: United States Army Command and General Staff College, May 1989), 132.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., iii.

<sup>9</sup>Michael J. Harwood, "Auftragstaktik: We Can't Get There From Here", (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Monograph, School Of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), 39.

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5. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Schmidt  
Center for Army Tactics  
USACGSC  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-6900
6. Colonel August W. Smith  
5917 Mt. Bonnell Road  
Austin, Texas 78731